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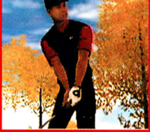

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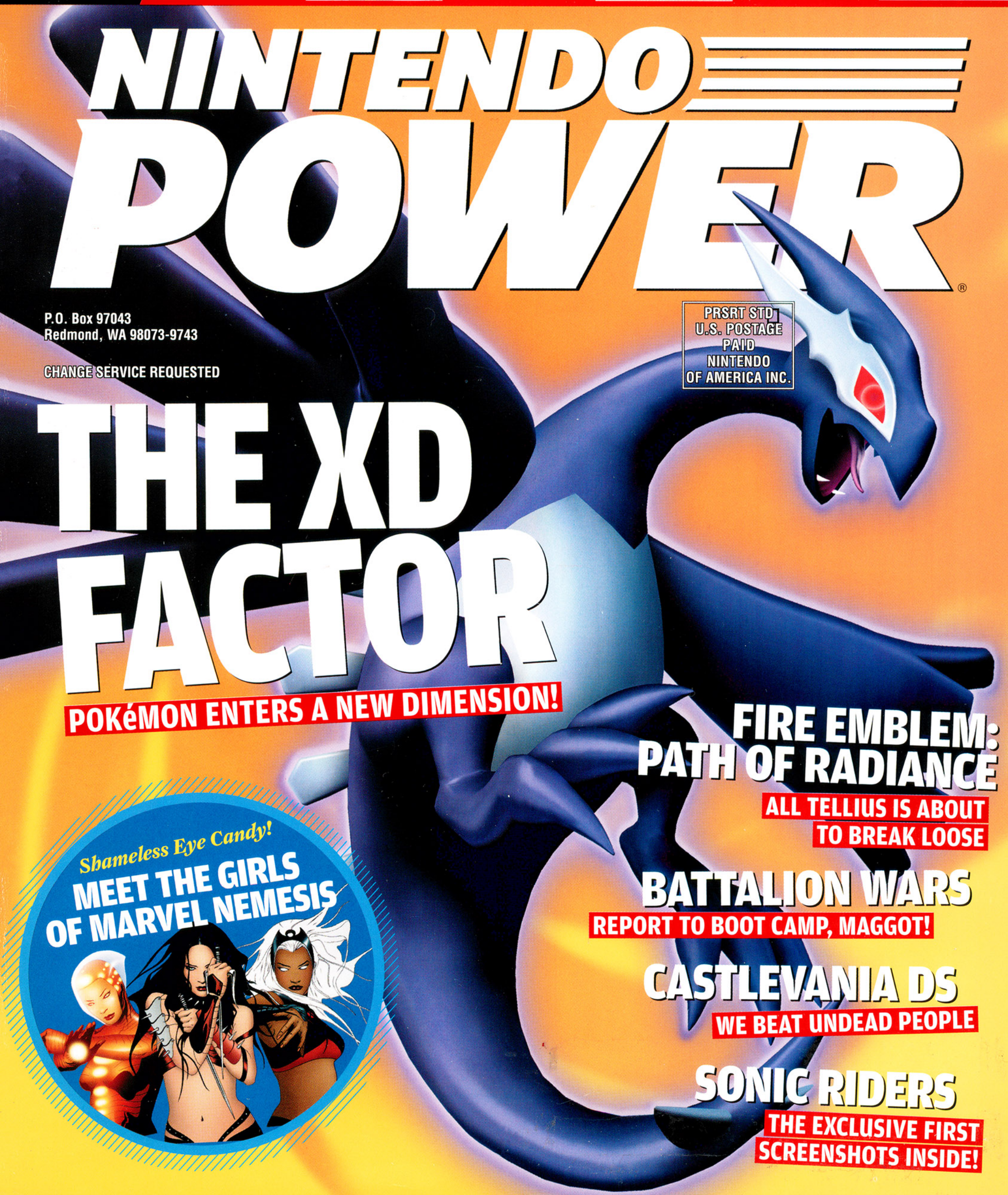

THE XD FACTOR

POKéMON ENTERS A NEW DIMENSION!

FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE

ALL TELLIUS IS ABOUT TO BREAK LOOSE

BATTALION WARS

REPORT TO BOOT CAMP, MAGGOT!

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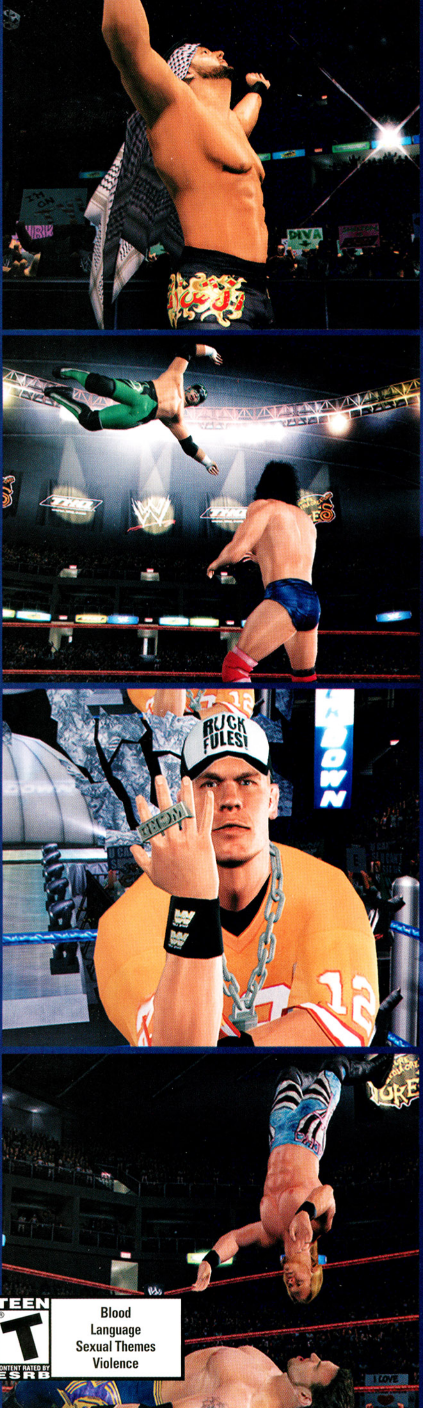
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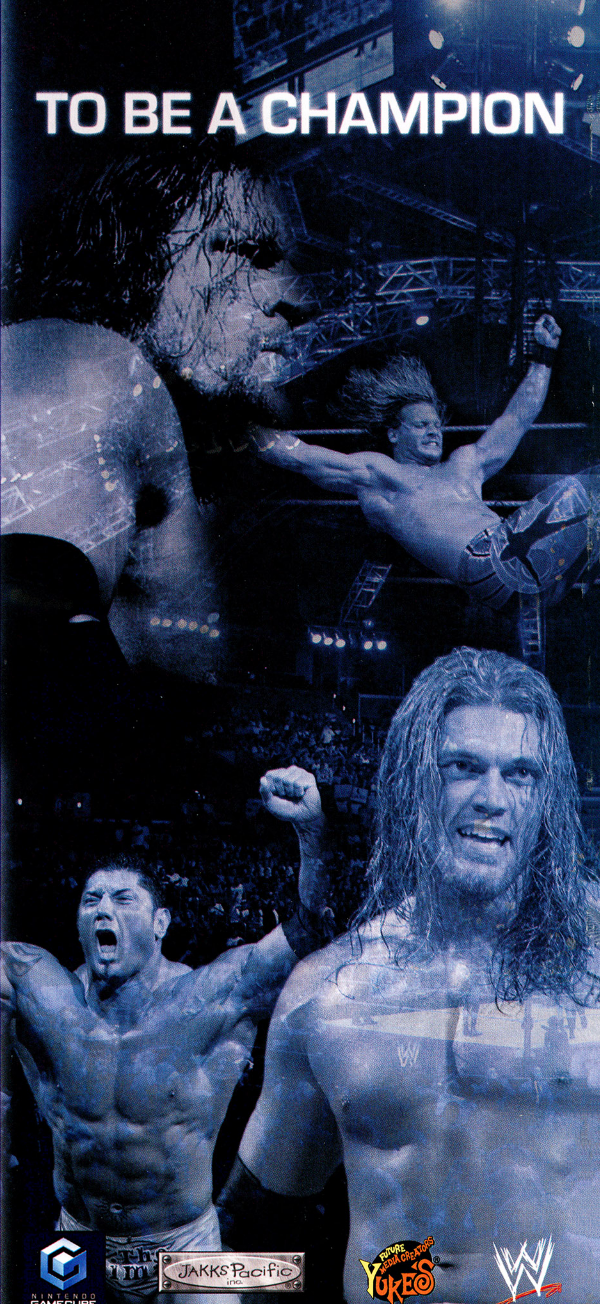
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PLAYER'S POLL SWEEPSTAKES

November 2005, Volume 197

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A. How old are you?
1. Under 6
2. 6-9
3. 10-12
4. 13-16
5. 17-24
6. 25 or older

B. Sex
1. Male
2. Female

C. Which of the following statements best describes your impression of this month's Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness cover story?
1. I liked the Pokémon XD article.
2. I didn't like the Pokémon XD article.
3. I'm not interested in Pokémon XD coverage of any sort.
4. I haven't read the article yet, but I intend to read it.

D. How interested in Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance are you, and how did you like this month's feature article?
1. I'm interested in the game, and I liked learning more about the characters.
2. I'm interested in the game, but I didn't like the article.
3. I read the article, but I'm not interested in the game.
4. I'm not interested in the game, and I didn't read the article.

E. Which Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance piece influenced your level of interest in the game most?
1. The Fire Emblem pull-out map
2. The Fire Emblem four-page character feature
3. The Fire Emblem critical review

F. Which of the statements most closely reflects your feelings about this month's Marvel Nemesis coverage?
1. The large pieces of art were fantastic!
2. I didn't like the artwork and would've rather read more about the game.
3. I'm indifferent.

G. Which of the following sums up your feelings about the Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix feature?
1. Died laughing. RIP.
2. Sorry, I forgot to laugh.
3. Huh?
4. Bring back the Family Tree.

H. How excited to pick up the magazine were you when you saw the image and text on this issue's cover?
1. The Pokémon XD image alone made me very excited—I'm not that interested in the other games covered!
2. The Pokémon XD image didn't do much for me, but when I read which other games were covered, I couldn't wait to tear into it.
3. Both the image and the other games listed made me very excited about this issue.
4. Neither the image nor the games listed made me excited about this issue.

I. How do you like the Community section of the magazine?
1. I'm a devoted fan, and I read it every month.
2. I like most of the content, but not all.
3. I'm not interested in most of the content, but I enjoy the occasional story.

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First Class
Stamp
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We penetrate deep behind enemy lines in Batallion Wars.

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Trace our steps to victory in the mystery thriller Trace Memory.

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If you're not prepared, the bosses in Castlevania DS will rob your soul.

RALTS
Lv 20
HP
22 / 41
EXP

RALTS gained
273 EXP. Points!

38
Wow, the residents of Orre sure are tall!

76
That's one lean, green machine. No, the helicopter.

48
Here, kitty-kitty-kitty!

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Uh, yeah, we heard you have a bat problem?

Yeah, but the drycleaning bill is brutal. Pg. 60

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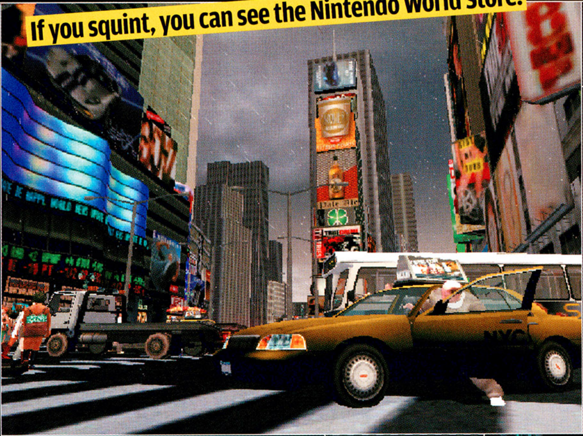

If you squint, you can see the Nintendo World Store!

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We heard the cabbies in New York were aggressive, but this is absurd.

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We dish out free legal advice, display the aging effects of long-term gaming, and beat Captain Falcon senseless.

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WWE: Pg.106

LUNCH
AT 11:30
MAGIC
AL
AT 3:00
Gotta Have
NEW!
WRIGLEY'S
Juicy Fruit
SOURS
tropikiwi kick

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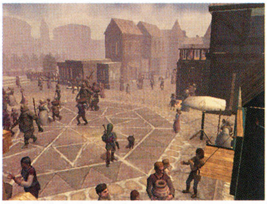
Pulse

A Link to the Future

Now that Twilight Princess is delayed until after March next year, you'll likely hear some moaning and cursing. We need to remind those whiners that Rome wasn't built in a day. The point is that you can't create something on a grand scale overnight. Quality demands time, and creativity requires freedom. Michelangelo (the artist, not the turtle) spent years working on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, and it didn't have a single puzzle, boss battle or motion-capture animation. Okay, maybe he was a slacker. But when Mr. Miyamoto asks for our patience so the Zelda team can deliver the most spectacular game ever, I think we should welcome the news. So we won't have Zelda for a few months. I'm not going to lose sleep over it. I'm going to play Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance, teach my Nintendog some new tricks, master Mario Kart DS, Tony Hawk, King Kong and dozens of other incredible titles coming out this year. As for Zelda coverage, NP will continue bringing you the inside story every month, as in this month's insightful article from Keisuke Nishimori, who's overseeing design of the game's playable characters. And we'll showcase the latest screenshots, like the intriguing scene shown here. If anything, we're even more excited about Twilight Princess than we were before, knowing that the team is doing everything possible to create a masterpiece.



Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

SMASH LINGO

I loved the "Smash Speak" piece [in Volume 195's "Smash Planet" article]. I have a few to add:

Bloody Towel: Pressing L+R+A+Start to end a match right before you lose.
Copyright: Knocking out Kirby's ability right after he copies you.
Dead Pose: Taunting right under the recovery platform.
Windshield Bug: Being dragged into a KO by an Arwing.

Hawkeye
via the Internet

MEDICAL SCHOOL, SHMEDICAL SCHOOL

My sister recently suffered from a distal stomach tumor. Luckily, I had my trusty copy of Nintendo Power (Volume 195), and with the right equipment, I performed the operation described in the Trauma Center feature. None of my friends believe that a gaming magazine saved my sister's life.

Patti M.
via the Internet

P.S. I accidentally left a limited-edition GBA in her appendix. Any ideas how to get it out?

Glad we could be of help, Patti. As for removing the GBA from your sister's appendix, you'll probably have to wait until the game comes out this winter to learn that procedure. If she sues you for malpractice, by the way, be sure to consult Capcom's Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney.

MUSIC TO HER EARS

In response to the article by Koji Kondo in Volume 195, all I have to say is please use orchestral music for The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess! As a musician (I play classical guitar), I feel nothing can beat live instruments. In a game that promises to be a cinematic experience, why not go all the way? The Zelda series has never been afraid to break new ground, and here is a wonderful opportunity to set a higher standard in video game music.

Laura C.
via the Internet

HEY, IT'S ON ESPN

Did any of the NP staff ever play any real sports (like football)? If so, were they any good?

Andrew R.
via the Internet

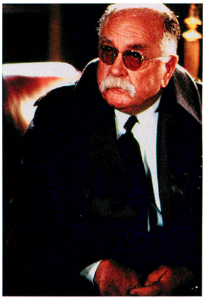
Does competitive eating count? 'Cause Pete can put away the Twinkies like nobody's business.

IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO

Who was the oldest worker at Nintendo Power? Does he still work there?

Mrtcalvario
via the Internet

Senior writer Steve Thomason is actually 87 years old. The illustration in the review section represents what he looked like six decades ago. Here's a more recent photo:



MICRO QUERIES

I have some questions about the Game Boy Micro. Will it work with the GBA-to-GCN cable? Will the GBA/DS AC adaptor work with it? Will it play all Game Boy games or just GBA games? Finally, what will it cost in Canadian dollars?

Alan K.
via the Internet

The Game Boy Micro doesn't support the standard GBA-to-GBA or GBA-to-GCN link cable, but it does have an extension port that could theoretically be used for such cables (or adaptors) made specifically for the Micro. We're not sure if it uses the same AC adaptor as the GBA and the DS, but it does come with its own, so that shouldn't be of much import. The unit plays only Game Boy Advance titles. As for the price, it'll cost $99.99 in the US, which comes to about $1.8 million Canadian at current exchange rates. Kidding! The MSRP in Canada is $129.95.

EVIL TESTIMONY

I check the top sellers list every month out of curiosity, and lately it has me very concerned. Although titles like Super Smash Bros. Melee and The Wind Waker are amazing games that definitely deserve to be there, it breaks my heart to see that Resident Evil 4 isn't performing as well as other games because it is probably the best game that I have ever played. Also, I fear that if RE4 doesn't sell well, Capcom might not want to release RE5 on the next Nintendo system. I want to let everyone know that you won't find a better game

>LETTER OF THE MONTH

I don't know about everyone else, but I, for one, am getting sick and tired of all the system-bashing out there. You can't talk to another gamer without listening to them rant about why their favorite console is better than yours. Log onto any video game message board, and you'll see that the vast majority of the discussion is along the lines of "GameCube roxors Xbox" or "Nintendo is teh doomed." You'd think everyone owned stock in the hardware manufacturers. I know it's been this way ever since the Super NES vs. Genesis days, but it seems to be getting to the point where that's all people care about. And it's only getting worse as the next generation approaches. Why can't we all just chill and enjoy talking games? If you feel the need to root for someone, pick a favorite baseball team.

Gandalf
via the Internet

Spoken like a true wizard, Gandalf.

for your money than Resident Evil 4. I'm not trying to sound like a commercial, but it's just that great.

Dan B.
via the Internet

Preach on, brother!

QUICKIES

Do you guys do any reading? It kind of balances out the brain damage from playing video games, in my opinion.

thedudewhosentyouthisemail
via the Internet

Of course. Some of our current favorites include Against All Odds: My Story *by Chuck Norris and* Quaker Oats Favorite Recipe Collection.

Why do the [audiences] in sports games usually look so ugly?

dtchadwick93
via the Internet

Have you ever been to a Raiders game? That's a joke! We kid Raider Nation!

I was wondering if people react the same way to seeing the NP crew in public as they do to seeing Brad Pitt.

David V.
via the Internet

If people respond to Brad Pitt with revulsion and object horror, then yes.

I was wondering if you could put this letter in the magazine.

Sam W.
via the Internet

No.

DEFENSELESS LINK?

Most of the screenshots for The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess that I've seen have the Z Button icon (where you equip items, weapons, etc.) replaced with the R Button. Usually [in Zelda games] you use the R Button to defend. Did the developers decide to switch it around or something?

Sonicblast77
via the Internet

In the E3 demo, the R Button still raised your shield (we're not sure why the developers felt the need to put that icon onscreen), but pressing Z gave you a gameplay pointer. Whether it will be that way in the final game remains to be seen.

MOM DEMANDS RESPECT

I need your help! I'm a 38-year-old mother with four kids and I'm completely addicted to the DS. But that's not my problem. How can I get these punks who work at the electronic stores to take me seriously?

Janzo
via the Internet

School them at a game of Meteos, then get in their faces and say, "Who's your momma?" That'll get their attention.

MAKING THE JUMP?

Is the game Jump Super Stars coming out in the US? Because I would really like to beat the crap out of Yuji.

DarkDarkRebel
via the Internet

Wouldn't we all? Unfortunately, Jump Super Stars has not been announced for a US release. It may be a difficult title to bring over because the various licenses involved belong to different companies here. We'll let you know if there's any news, though.

FAIR PLAY

I was casually flipping through the [review] archives in Volume 195 when something caught my eye. In the past year, not a single [first-party] title had received [a score] lower than six. Could you explain this to me?

MarioManiac2
via the Internet

Yeah, we don't work for the official 3DO magazine. (Okay, that was a cheap shot.) The fact of the matter is that Nintendo titles are typically very good. But we'd never give a first- or second-party game a high score simply because it's published by Nintendo. Just look at our Geist review for proof.

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

I'd love to see a crossover game for Sonic and Mario where an interdimensional crisis causes the two heroes to team up to save both of their worlds. Seeing Mario trash Eggman and Sonic stomp some Koopas would be awesome. Who knows, maybe Mario could even harness the power of the Chaos Emeralds.

Matt F.
via the Internet

We bet a lot of fans would love to see such a crossover. Nintendo and Sega have worked together before, so hopefully this dream matchup will become a reality someday.

DEFINE "CUTE"

I'm insulted that there are no Boston terriers in Nintendogs! I have three of them and they are cute as can be. (OK, so one of them is basically a watermelon with legs.) I might consider buying the game if I can get an apology and the release date!

Gardevoir
via the Internet

We're sorry that one of your dogs looks like a watermelon. And the game is already out.

THE PRICE OF HISTORY

How much is a Virtual Boy nowadays? I just think it would be really cool to have one. I know it wasn't a big hit, so I guess it might be pretty rare. If you could tell me the price, as well as a couple of the top games for it, that would be great.

jacob
via the Internet

At the time of this writing, there were several Virtual Boy systems on eBay going for less than $100. As for the best games, we'd recommend Mario's Tennis, Mario Clash and Wario Land.

VIRTUAL BOY

Virtual Boy system on eBay: $80
Wario Land: $25
Making your eyes bleed: priceless

BLASPHEMY

What about us girls? You showed a picture of Ms. Anderson (in Volume 195), so the girls should get a picture of Johnny Depp. David Hasselhof is not very cute or sexy.

Kira W.
via the Internet

We're going to pretend you didn't say that.

COMING ATTRACTION

What do you guys know about the game called The Movies? I read about it in one of your previous issues, but I haven't seen anything on it in a while. Any news?

Matt N.
via the Internet

Buzz for the console versions of The Movies has been pretty quiet of late, but the GCN game is still due for release some time next year according to Activision. It's being developed by Peter Molyneux's Lionhead Studios, which is known for taking its sweet time. The game sounds promising, though, so we'll be sure to stay on top of it.

GOOD DOG

In Volume 195, I noticed that you skipped days 6, 8 and 10 [in the Nintendogs article]. Why?

The Sugar Bandit
via the Internet

Those were the days Andy was training his dog to eat babies.

KNOW YOUR ROLE

I have had my DS since last Christmas and I love it, but so far, all of the games have been too short. When will I be able to buy a nice long RPG? Also, can you tell me if there are going to be any massively multiplayer online RPGs for the DS?

nookhj
via the Internet

Lunar: Dragon Song should be available by the time you read this (check out our review on page 114), and Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time will hit stores November 28th. If you're into strategy games, Advance Wars: Dual Strike also offers a lengthy experience. As for MMORPGs, nothing's been announced, but we'd be surprised if one doesn't materialize eventually.

MISSING GEEKS

Lately, I've realized a big problem I have is a lack of geeks around me. There's no one to play nonstop Super Smash Bros. with me. No one to discuss how cool it would be if Megatron got the Matrix. No one to argue for hours whether or not Link has a sweeter arsenal than Samus. Personally, I'd like to know where all the geeks have gone.

John H.
via the Internet

Well, there are certainly no geeks here. No siree. Can't help you there.

Oh, by the way, it would be totally awesome if Megatron got his hands on the Matrix. And Link's arsenal is way sweeter than Samus's. Now, if you'll excuse us, we're off to play some Super Smash Bros.

MISSING GEMS

I picked up Sonic Gems Collection a few days ago, and overall, it isn't a bad game. I think it was great pairing Sonic R and Sonic CD together, and it's awesome that Sonic the Fighters was finally released in a home version. But why rehash the six Game Gear games when they were already re-released on Sonic Adventure DX? They should have included something like Knuckles Chaotix [instead].

Tim L.
via the Internet

We couldn't agree more, Tim. The obscure Sega Sonic Arcade would have been a great inclusion, as well. Maybe we'll see them in the eventual release of Sonic Ultra Collection: Special Championship Edition.

NESS DOES IT ALL THE TIME!

I have a couple of questions to ask. Where would I find out about any new F-Zero games coming soon? What would you do if Captain Falcon came to your house?

F-zeroman#7
via the Internet

As with all of Nintendo's classic franchises, you can depend on us to keep you abreast of the latest F-Zero news. What would we do if Captain Falcon showed up at our door? First, we'd close our eyes real tight and hope he disappears because Captain Falcon is a fictional character. If he was still there when we opened our eyes, we'd say "Show me your moves!" before hitting him upside the head with a baseball bat.

YOU WANT THE TRUTH?

I was recently ripping out the posters from my issues of NP when I came across the Twilight Princess poster from Volume 194. I noticed that the symbol on the back of the cloaked figure (whom I believe you said to be Zelda) resembles the symbol from the Lens of Truth/Mask of Truth. Is that just a coincidence?

Diablo11D
via the Internet

You noticed that too, huh? We don't know if it's a coincidence or not, but it certainly has us intrigued.

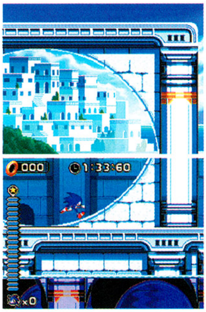
CORRECTOR'S CORNER

The free poster in Volume 195 featured Advance Wars for the DS. But there's something wrong with it. The tank on the right says "Red Star." What happened to Orange Star!?! Don't tell me they changed the name.

Flaming Squirrel of Death
via the Internet

Don't worry, Flaming Squirrel of Death (if that is your real name). The art on that poster originated from Japan, where the army in question is known as Red Star. It's still called Orange Star on this side of the Pacific.

Also, in last month's "2-D or Not 2-D" feature, we accidentally ran a Castlevania screenshot in the Sonic Rush sidebar. Here's the shot that was supposed to appear:



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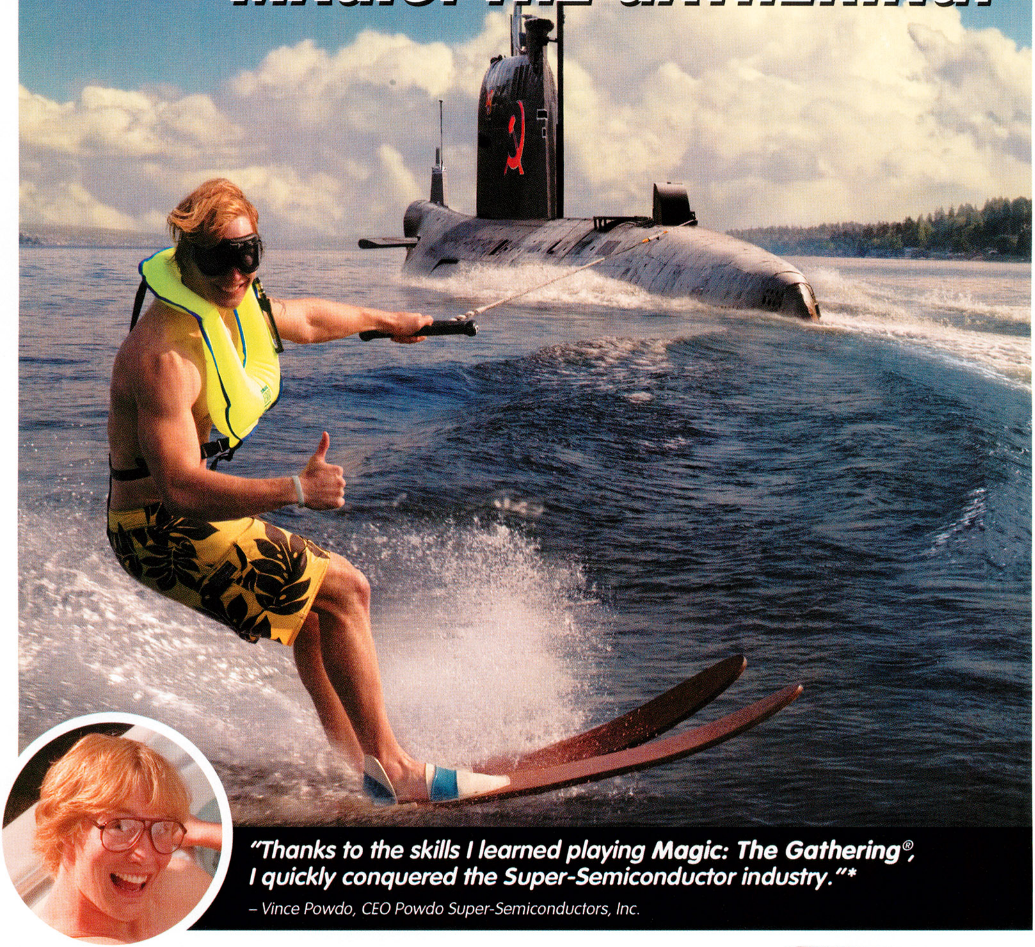
The GEEK BILLIONAIRE LIFESTYLE *begins with* MAGIC: THE GATHERING!



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MOST WANTED

Go to nintendo.com to vote for your most-wanted games and let your voice be heard!

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Absence makes the heart grow fonder. The delay has had no impact on the fevered anticipation of Twilight Princess.

1. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
2. Shadow the Hedgehog
3. Super Mario Strikers
4. Peter Jackson's King Kong
5. Battalion Wars

He may be a toddler, but if you let him throw you upwards, you'll almost reach the stars! Oh yeah!

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

The big ape is number one yet again. It's Donkey Kong's country—we all just live in it.

1. Donkey Kong Country 3
2. Mario Tennis Advance
3. Gunstar Super Heroes
4. Mega Man Zero 4
5. Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas

>NINTENDO DS

You sure you wouldn't prefer Animal Crossing? It's probably more your speed than trying to compete with us in Mario Kart.

1. Mario Kart DS
2. Animal Crossing: Wild World
3. New Super Mario Bros.
4. Sonic Rush
5. Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Just like its film counterpart, Fantastic Four's mediocrity didn't prevent the game from becoming a summer blockbuster.

1. Fantastic Four
2. Super Smash Bros. Melee
3. Pokémon Colosseum
4. Super Mario Sunshine
5. Animal Crossing
6. Madagascar
7. Kirby Air Ride
8. MVP Baseball 2005
9. Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life
10. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

TOP SELLERS

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

How successful is Pokémon? Total sales from the latest game would exceed the value of an actual emerald the size of Neptune. It's true.

"Clobber this, Fantastic *Failures!*"

1. Pokémon Emerald
2. Fantastic Four
3. *Star Wars* Episode II: Attack of the Clones
4. Madagascar
5. LEGO *Star Wars*
6. Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones
7. Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Protoman
8. Disney Princess
9. *Star Wars* Episode III: Revenge of the Sith
10. Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Colonel

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO DS

Keep buying Meteos! We want a Wi-Fi-enabled sequel!

1 Kirby: Canvas Curse

2 Super Mario 64 DS

3 Meteos

4 WarioWare: Touched!

5 GoldenEye: Rogue Agent

6 *Star Wars* Episode III: RotS

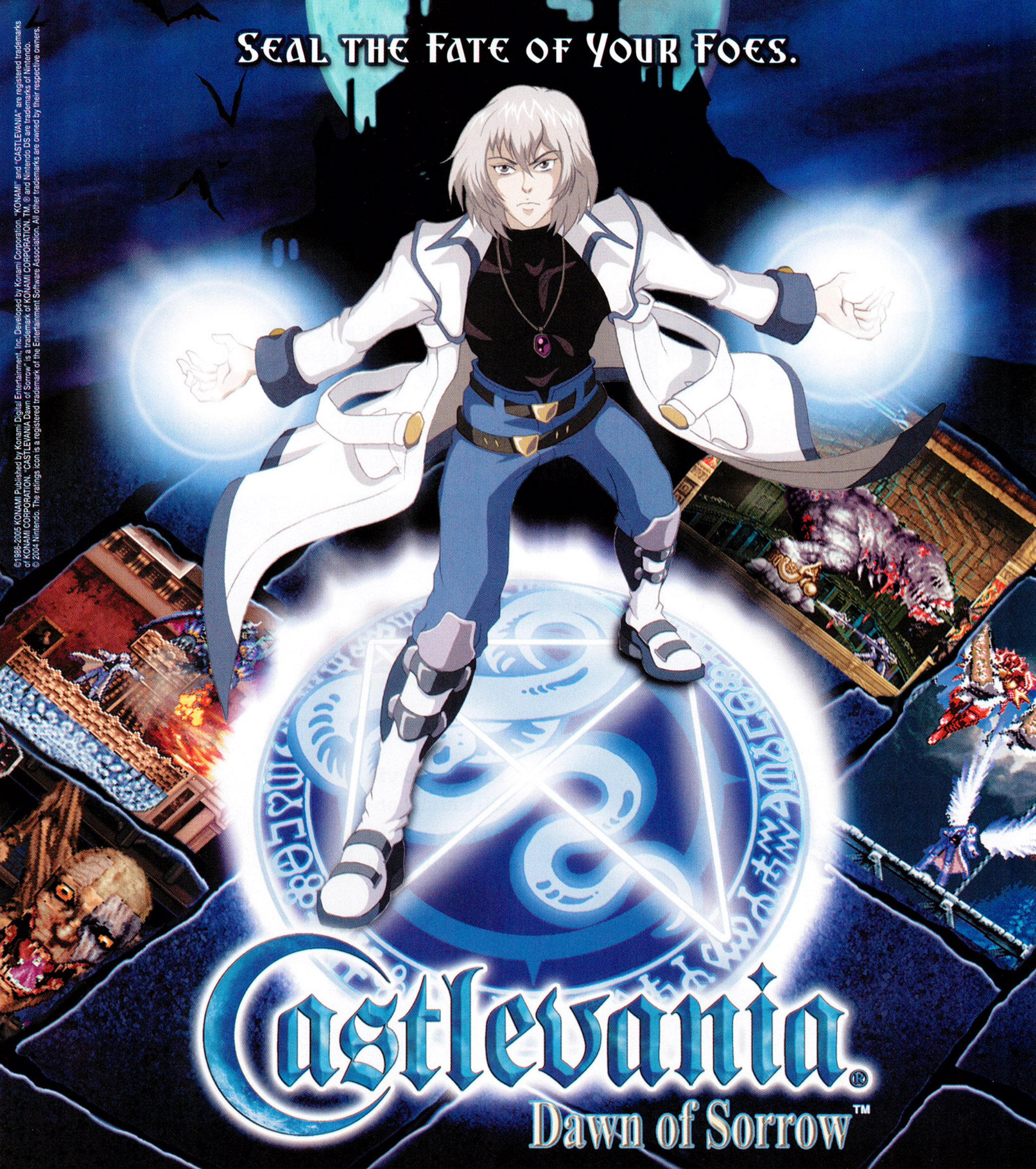
7 Yoshi Touch & Go

8 Bomberman

9 Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory

10 Madagascar

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.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Fantasy Violence
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www.konami.com/castlevania
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News

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PLAY

4/5
1420
2/3
MPH
121

BURNOUT COLLIDES WITH THE DS

BOWSER CRASHES THE PARTY

TOKYO GAME SHOW!

Iwata Speaks!

When Nintendo prez Satoru Iwata speaks, the gaming world listens. He won a major ovation at the GDC, then gave key Revolution hints at E3. As NP goes to press, Iwata is readying his September 16 TGS keynote speech. Stay tuned to **nintendo.com** for breaking details.

MMMMM . . . NO-BRAINER

Resident Evolves

News from Japan! Capcom is returning to the original source of Biohazard, known as Resident Evil in North America, to get extrasensory with survival-horror on the DS.

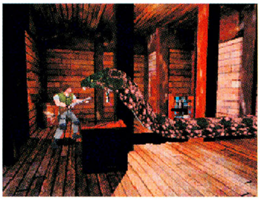
How could RE be scarier? The original shocked the world by debuting survival-horror in 1996. Then the '02 remake ripped open the wound on the GCN to glisten with gory prerendered backgrounds that are still unmatched in beauty. Soon Japanese gamers will revisit RE with Biohazard: Deadly Silence, which will get under players' skin in new, horrifying ways on the DS.

The plot, for those who've never dared step into the most nightmarish mansion in video games, follows the Alpha Team from S.T.A.R.S. (Special Tactics and Rescue Service) as the squad investigates the disappearance of the Bravo Team—which hasn't been heard from since its copter went down. Upon arriving at the mountain crash site, Alpha comes under attack and has to take cover in a mansion. In the original and the GCN remake, you then choose either Jill Valentine or Chris Redfield to explore the manse, filled with zombies, grotesque creatures and lots of puzzles. Though the DS version will re-create the scenario, given the many surprises in the GCN version, we have to wonder whether Capcom will work in new swerves.

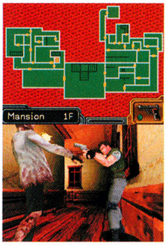
For now, Capcom has stated that the player will still select Jill or Chris, both of whom have been revamped with new character models and motions. The publisher also plans wireless play for two to four players—what this might mean for the gameplay is still under wraps.

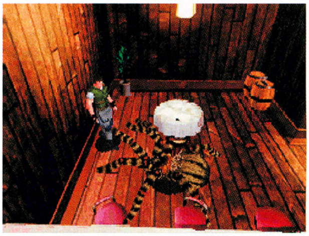
Living RE via DS touch control, exposing the tactile side of the story, has us creeped out the most—see details below. The dual-screener will also have persistent menus, and if there's one thing that Konami's Castlevania on the DS has taught us, it's how an at-a-glance map smooths game flow. Capcom will do its mansion map one better—the background color will reflect the character's health. The DS game hasn't yet been pinned for release outside of Japan. Stay tuned for more details. — Steven G.

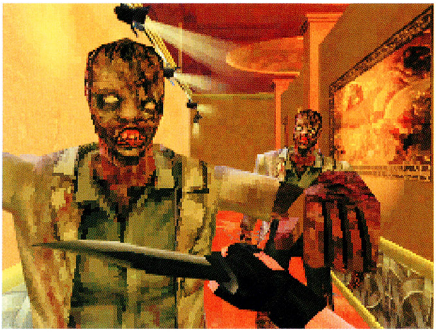
Living RE via DS touch control, exposing the tactile side of the story, has us creeped out the most.

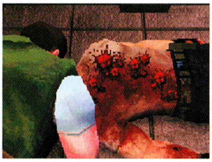


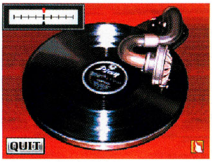
Old buds like zombies, the megasnake and the giant spider will return in Deadly Silence.

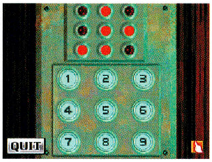




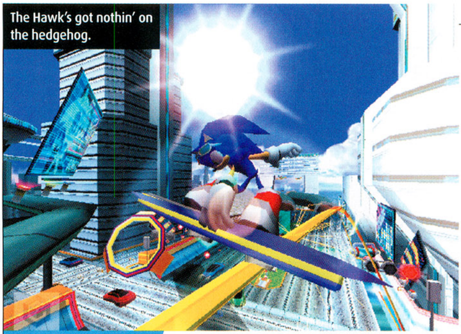








Capcom will redefine the Biohazard standard with DS touch control, allowing players to slash at zombies with a knife, perform artificial respiration and directly handle such puzzling gear as record-playing gramophones and key-coded door locks. The mansion-manhandling possibilities are endless.



The Hawk's got nothin' on the hedgehog.

GO KICKY FAST, OKAY?

Blue Boardin'

In case Gems Collection, Shadow and Rush aren't enough to satisfy your appetite for hedgehog, Sega readies another Sonic boom.

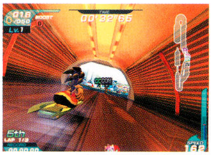
One of the big events at Tokyo Game Show will be the unveiling of Sonic Riders, a new hoverboard racing game for the GCN starring the blue blur and pals. Currently in development at SonicTeam, the title will support up to four players, and is slated for a winter release. (Where have they been hiding this?) Though additional details are scarce as we go to press, Sega was kind enough to provide us with some early screenshots.

From what we can discern, the game boasts a variety of imaginative locales, plenty of rails to grind and a trick system of some sort. The cast of characters appears to dig deep into the Sonic universe, even including what looks like Bean the Dynamite.

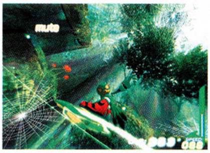
In the future, robots will rule the earth, and talking animals will use our cities as hoverboard courses.

And of course, being a Sonic title, we expect it to move blazingly fast.

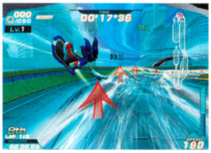
Hopefully the game looks as good in motion as it does in these screens. We'll be sure to get some hands-on time with it at the show, so look for our full impressions next month. —Steve T.



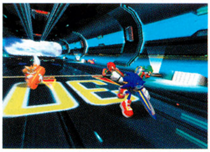
Is anyone else getting a sweet F-Zero vibe?



Bean?!? Is that you, Bean? Oh, how we've missed you!



Looks like Sonic has found a new way to make Mach speed faster.



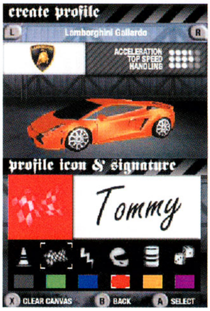
Hopefully the blue dude's friends won't forever have to eat his dust.

I FOUGHT THE LAW

Cops and Drivers

EA's Need for Speed series goes even farther underground with Most Wanted and takes Nintendo DS dual-screen features with it.

The acceleration-addicted drivers of the Need for Speed franchise have had a sketchy relationship with state troopers ever since Hot Pursuit introduced police chases to 3-D racers. In the upcoming Most Wanted, participants go head-to-head with the authorities and learn EA's "strategic cop pursuit" techniques for staying beyond reach of the long arm of the law. The more a driver is able to elude the police, the more street cred he will earn. The DS version has a 3-D map on the lower screen (an upgrade from Underground 2's flat map) and an improved customization interface that utilizes touch control for quick visual and performance adjustments. Need for Speed is known for featuring hot licensed cars, and Most Wanted for DS continues the tradition with 14 autos, including new Lamborghini and Mustang models. —George S.



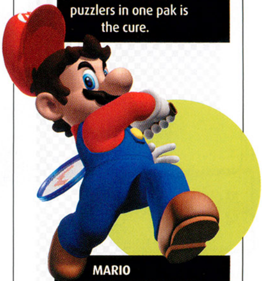
Senior writer Steve Thomason (aka "Tommy") can pimp his tangerine Lamborghini with dope vinyls and rippin' mods.

ITALIAN HOLIDAY

Trip Marios on Dec. 5th

The most prolific gamer on the planet appears in three releases on one day.

DR. MARIO & PUZZLE LEAGUE: December is smack-dab in the middle of cold and flu season. A GBA release of two classic puzzlers in one pak is the cure.



MARIO TENNIS: POWER TOUR: The courts will likely be frozen over where you live, but in Mario's world it's sunshine, blue skies and tennis every day.

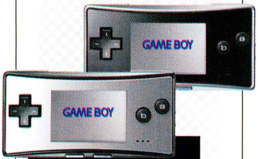
SUPER MARIO STRIKERS: Mario goes by his first name alone, and so does soccer legend Pelé. Coincidence? Yes, but the kickin' hero is definitely ready to score some goals.

PRET-A-PORTABLE

Handheld Style 101

There's been a frenzy of handheld news of late—keep your styles straight with a quick rundown.

GAME BOY SP: It can't dress for any occasion like the Game Boy Micro, but the GBA SP ($79.99 MSRP), will soon add slick new style options: Pearl Blue and Graphite.



GAME BOY MICRO: Chic and sleek, the bright-screened Micro will make you a GBA playa for $99.99 MSRP. And new faceplates (see page 75) mean you never have to commit to a color again.

NINTENDO DS: No style news here, unless you count the hotcakes effect that the Nintendo DS's new price—$129.99 MSRP—will have on the dual-screener. It'll be everywhere.

With Trace, Sylux and Weavel emerging, will one Wi-Fi planet be big enough for seven hunters?

DEADLIER ODDS

Bigger Prey for Hunters

New revelations make it clear: Samus fans will experience a shockingly expansive Metroid experience when Prime Hunting season opens on the DS.

The Tetra Galaxy will be crammed with more than anyone guessed when Metroid Prime Hunters was first announced. When the FPS hits—it's now scheduled for early 2006—the reward will be worth the wait. A new universe of gameplay is being added. You'll be able to play it over the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection and gun for foes across the country.

With new details popping up on the final hunters, veiled in secrecy since E3, you'll have more well-developed foes to select for LAN and Wi-Fi fragfests. That's a far cry from typical multiplayer choices: MPH won't dish out one-dimensional dudes with different skins. You'll face each of six other hunters in the main story, all of whom are drawn to Tetra and its ultimate prize, a superweapon, for their own reasons. At E3, Nintendo showed off rocky Spire, executioner-judge Noxus and evil-experiment Kanden. Now get to know the final three.

Trace (above left): Part of the parasitic Kriken race, Trace is undergoing a rite of passage to find new planets for the Kriken to swarm. When Trace learns of the Tetra Galaxy and its dead planets, he smells an opportunity—the superweapon is just icing on the cake.

Sylux (above middle): The sharpshooter Sylux conceals much but doesn't hide a hatred for Samus and her Galactic Federation. The hunter follows Samus to the Tetra Galaxy for an ambush, then learns of the nearby überweapon, just the thing for nailing Sylux's prey and her federation.

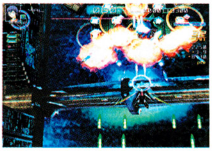
Weavel (above right): The Space Pirate general was wounded so badly in a battle with Samus that he lived only by having his brain transplanted to mobile life support. He wants the superweapon, but is it for the Space Pirates? Only the juggernaut knows. We'll find out next year. —Steven G.

EXPLOSIONS = FUN!

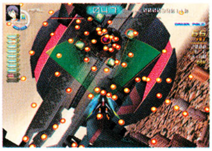
Chaotic Energy

Ikaruga pushed our motor skills to the limit, but can North America handle a shooter as frantic as Chaos Field Expanded? Bring it!

There's never a dull moment in Chaos Field Expanded, a shootfest the likes of Ikaruga but (dare we say) even crazier. Massive enemies fire wide arrays of projectiles across the screen in different patterns all at once. You must identify the enemies' firing patterns while using your Radiant Silvergun to wipe away enemy fire—all while constantly shooting at and locking on to enemy craft. And to add another level of complexity, CFE allows you to switch back and forth between the Order Field and the Chaos Field, where your firepower increases and the action becomes mind-bogglingly faster. CFE first saw the light of day on the Japanese Dreamcast as Chaos Field in late 2004—this is the first time it will be available on a North American console. Expect this insane shooter to hit our shores sometime in October. —Andy M.



Run-of-the-mill enemies in Chaos Field Expanded for Nintendo GameCube are so huge, they'd be bosses in another game.



GAMESPOT
E3
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WINNER

"Best Adventure Game" Award
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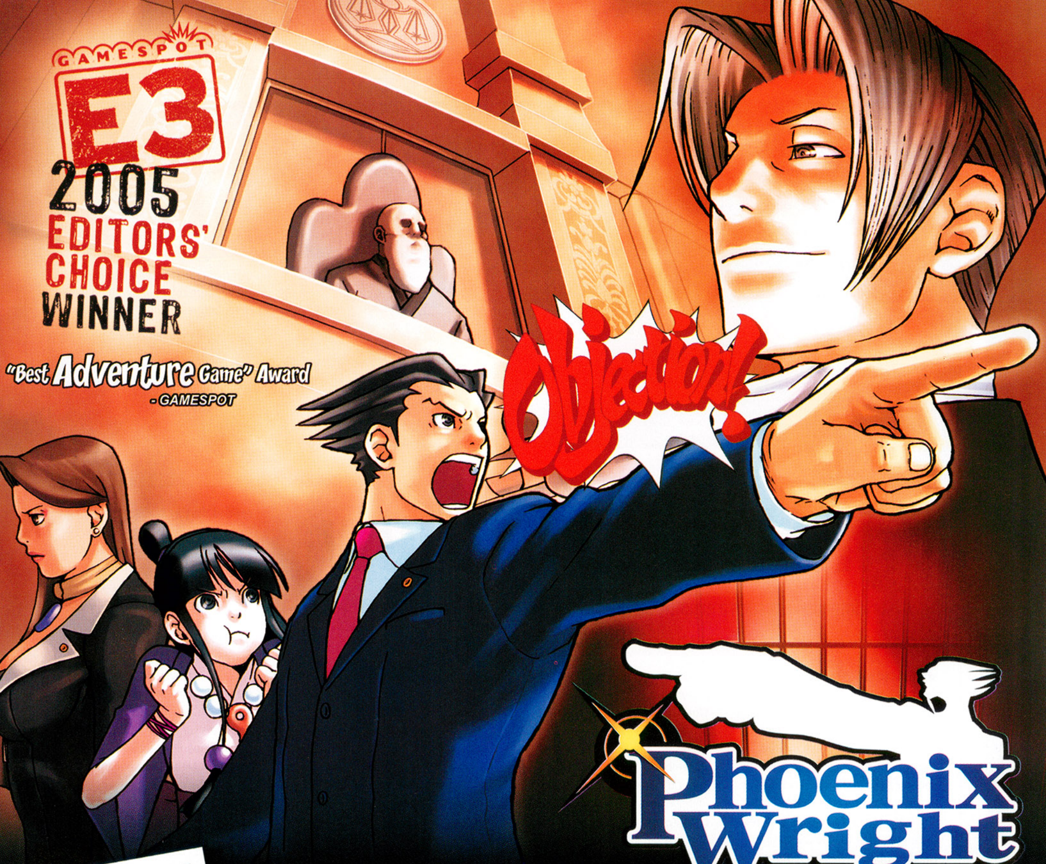

Phoenix Wright™
Ace Attorney

Cross Examination
-- Hard Evidence --
Profiles
Evidence
Larry Butz
Age: 23
Gender: Male

Phoenix
The defendant? Well, that's Larry Butz, Your Honor.

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TEEN
T
Blood
Language
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Violence
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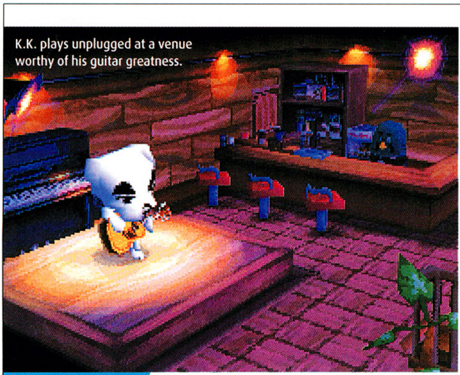
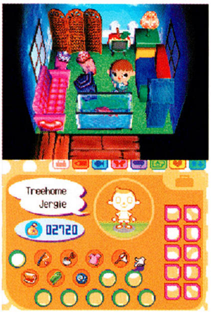
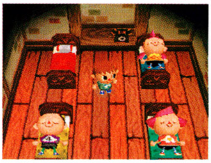


K.K. plays unplugged at a venue worthy of his guitar greatness.



Four players, one house? You'll want to expand your digs—ASAP.



Animal Crossing: Wild World will have more colors of bedhead than ever before.

TRADING SPACES

Wild World in View

How has Nintendo kept such a gigantic DS planet hidden from fans? Start packing your bags—we've got new details about how the massive migration will begin!

Millions of rabid fans can't wait to return to the forest towns found in the Animal Crossing realm. The GCN game was one of this console gen's biggest sleeper hits, selling a million-plus copies in North America since its '02 debut. Factor in the high multiplayer usage, which hosted up to four players in one town—you can almost hear the mighty roar for the DS version, which, among other new features that radically expand the GCN concept, will bring this megacommunity together via the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

Considering the DS game's potential population, Animal Crossing: Wild World, the new title for the game, seems to be a dead-on description of what's in store for players come December 5. While specific details about the Wi-Fi gameplay remain under wraps, new details hint at big changes set to rock the Animal Crossing planet.

First off, seemingly taking a page from MTV's *The Real World*, the four players who can live in one village—sharing a DS game card—will all reside in the same house, rather than the four separate abodes in the console version. It's a profound difference: bunkmates will share the same sleeping quarters, and like in the GCN game, only one town-sharing player can roam the vicinity at a time. The others slumber.

The roommates will also share in the home design; all four can freely place and move stuff around the house. Roomies will also share mortgage payments, which may make it much faster to pay off debt and expand the tiny starter house. When four players are crashing the pad, they'll certainly need more elbow room—not to mention space for all their stuff.

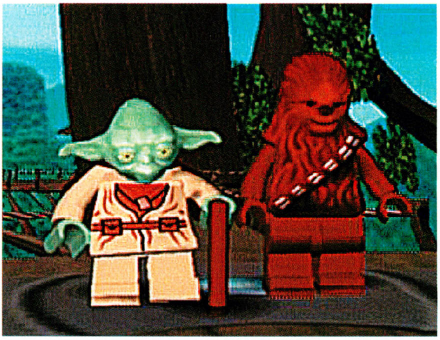
In the next issue of NP, we'll finally report on what it's like to live in the new villages. For now, we can bring you early word that the DS game revives GCN faves, plus slips in many surprises. Here's one to whet your whistle: AC fans were surprised to learn this summer that the train station has been replaced by a huge gate that (via LAN and Wi-Fi) leads to other towns. Where does that leave musical pooch K.K. Slider, AC's unofficial mascot? Those millions of fans who are used to seeing him strum at the station will now hear his weekly jams in one of Wild World's entirely new locations, a proper venue for his infamous howling routine. —Steven G.

BLOCKBUSTER?

Stuck on *Star Wars*

Traveller's Tales builds a solid action title out of the *Star Wars* prequel trilogy and LEGO blocks. Can the Indiana Jones Erector Set be far behind?

Imagine you're in a galaxy far, far away, and that every object (including people, Wookiees, etc.) are built of LEGO blocks. That's the premise of Eidos's LEGO *Star Wars* The Video Game for GCN, but the balance tips dramatically to the *Star Wars* side of the megamarketing partnership—as it should, since it's where the action comes from. With more than 30 playable characters re-creating scenes from *Episode I: The Phantom Menace*, *Episode II: Attack of the Clones* and *Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*, the entire prequel trilogy awaits your mastery. Entering pod races on Mos Espa, piloting the sleek Naboo fighter and solving puzzles using the Force—it's all in a day's work for intrepid snap-and-go characters. Two-player drop-in, drop-out capability is a nice touch. We expect an early fall release and somewhat stiff cinematics. —Scott P.



Yoda and a nicely coiffed Wookiee join Obi-Wan Kenobi, Princess Amidala, C-3PO, R2-D2, Anakin Skywalker and others in a sprawling GCN adventure.

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PERIPHERAL VISION

Huge Impact on the DS

Metroid Prime Pinball is set to get shaken up by a new GBA-slot pak.

Nintendo said that the DS's GBA slot could be used for DS peripherals, and now it's following through. The Nintendo DS Rumble Pak will ship with Metroid Prime Pinball on October 24; it'll have the usual pinball percussion, plus it'll shake when Samus attacks with weapons.

Bumpers, flippers, bombs and beams are getting supercharged.

Accessorize for Excess

Three peripherals? Karaoke Revolution Party dares to go there.

Konami's KRP makes it easy to spark a big bash by packing in over 50 classic and current hits, plus a special-edition black GCN mic. What about the mic you have from Mario Party 6 (or 7)? Put it to use in Duets mode. To step up to the ultranauts Sing and Dance mode, you'll need a GCN-compatible mat, like the one from DDR: Mario Mix.

One mic? Two mics? And a dance mat? Total insanity!

The Big News. In Short.

Nintendo Fusion Tour headliner **Fall Out Boy**, which has hit heavy rotation on MTV, has been added to the **Tony Hawk's American Wasteland** soundtrack as one of 14 punk-pop bands who are remaking classic punk tunes for the console game. . . . Atlus is slipping a DS-mic extra into **SBK: Snowboard Kids**; when your shredder is hit with the Sleep attack, you can shout to wake him up. . . . After creating Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour, the best trading-card game ever to grace a system, Konami has set its sights on the **Marvel Trading Card Game**; will the Big K evolve this TCG on the DS as well? . . . Midway has been on the franchise fast track for months, hooking up with Cartoon Network and MTV. Now it adds ***The Ant Bully***, which joins *Happy Feet* as the second 2006 Warner Bros. CGI movie adaptation to hit Midway's slate. . . . In more Midway news, just when you thought The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction would rule the urban jungle, the publisher has said that it will release **Rampage: Total Destruction**, a fresh take on its arcade classic, as a budget title for the GCN next spring. . . . D3 hasn't even released its GBA take on the ***Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi*** toon, and it already has early-'06 plans for a DS game that's entirely controlled with a guitar on the touch screen. . . . A tasty tidbit comes from the Web newsletter of **Sid Meier**, the genius behind Civilization and other groundbreaking games: he's expressed great interest in developing his titles for the DS and says news is forthcoming. Maybe we'll see some of his recent Pirates action commandeer the dual screens? —Steven G.

IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE

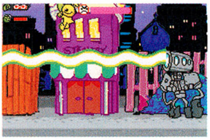
Alien Lands in Europe

Alien Hominid is set for a European release on Game Boy Advance. North American domination may be on the horizon.

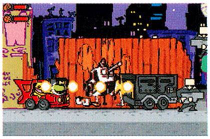
Introduced as a Flash animation prototype by The Behemoth in 2002, Alien Hominid was released by O~3 Entertainment in its completed form last year on the GCN. This year England's Zoo Digital Publishing is releasing the game for the GBA across Europe. The publisher's goal is to include as many of the original levels as possible, along with all of the same vehicles, enemies and power-ups. The game's 2-D play and bold sprite-based art bode well for a faithful GBA interpretation.

The prototype was downloaded more than 11 million times, so it's safe to say that the little yellow creature with the crooked smile has a large fan base, even if he is very mean to FBI agents.

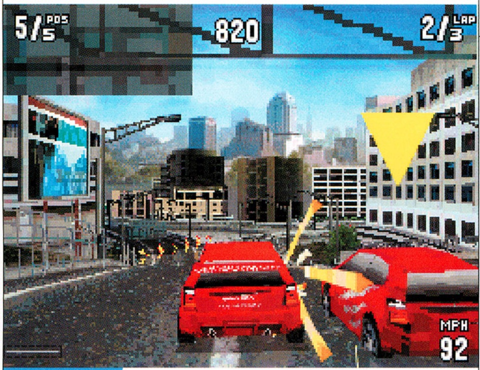
Zoo Digital hopes to release the handheld version of the game in North America, but there are no solid plans to report yet. —George S.



On foot or in vehicles, the creature takes Earth by storm.



Bustletron sets its sights on Alien Hominid in the GBA side-scroller.



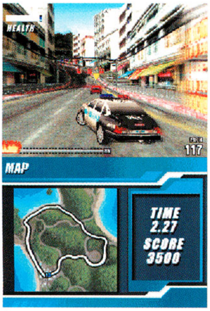
CRASH INTO ME

Two-Screen Pileup

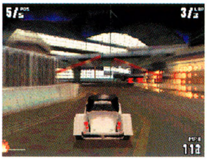
EA and Criterion's Burnout series races onto the DS with a greatest-hits package that adds new elements to favorite tracks, cars and modes.

In Great Britain, driving on the left side of the road is normal. In the Burnout series (developed by British company Criterion), oncoming cars flash their headlights if you favor the left side, but it's still perfectly normal and deserving of a speed boost. Burnout Legends for the DS continues the franchise's tradition of lawlessness on 12 harrowing tracks. "The game is the very best of Burnout, but with some nice twists that will make it feel unique on the DS," said senior producer Nick Channon in an NP interview. "We've got a great variety of all of the best tracks from Burnout 1, 2 and 3. Also, we've completely restructured the World Tour from the PSP version and designed it specifically for the DS." The World Tour incorporates Crash-mode events as part of the competition, featuring Crash junctions that appear in no other Burnout game. The DS version of Legends also includes 10 cars that are not in the PSP version, along with a lower-screen map and HUD elements that keep the upper screen from being cluttered. In Crash mode, which challenges you to create costly collisions, you can manipulate your vehicle using touch control as it flies into other cars.

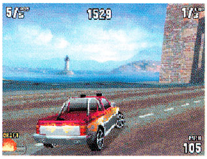
The game allows for two-player racing with a single card, and five-player competition using multiple cards. It is due out in November. —George S.



Supertrooper—Pursuit mode has police cruisers of increasing power.



Original gangster—The '30s unlockable of Burnout 2 rides again.

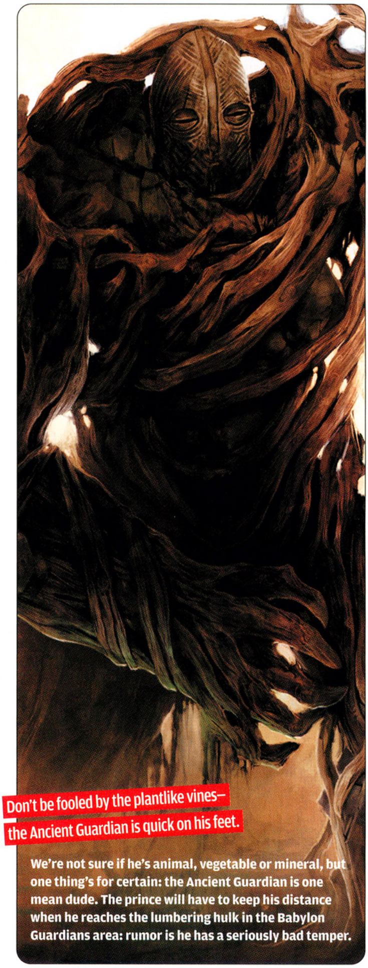


Curvaceous—Take the turns of Harbor Town at Burnout 3 speeds.

Naughty, Naughty!
Pure Evil!
And More Naughty!

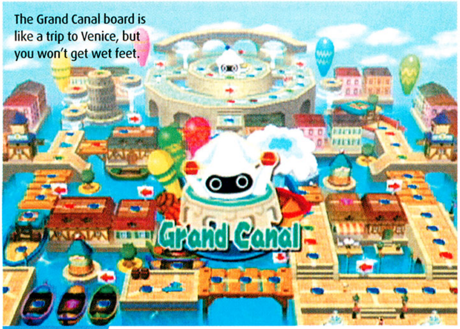
The Bad Beast of Babylon!

It's bad enough that Prince of Persia 3's namesake has to return to the town that has disowned him—now he's gotta deal with getting randomly possessed by his evil twin spirit. To make things worse, giant monsters like the Ancient Guardian aren't thrilled about his highness's homecoming, either.



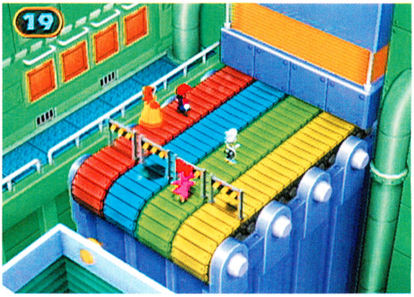
Don't be fooled by the plantlike vines—the Ancient Guardian is quick on his feet.

We're not sure if he's animal, vegetable or mineral, but one thing's for certain: the Ancient Guardian is one mean dude. The prince will have to keep his distance when he reaches the lumbering hulk in the Babylon Guardians area: rumor is he has a seriously bad temper.



The Grand Canal board is like a trip to Venice, but you won't get wet feet.

Neon Heights



Minigames include races, battles and even team competitions. Expect hurdles at every turn.

FEEDS EIGHT

Boarding Party

We're nearing November, so there must be a new Mario Party game on the way; there is, and we've got the amazing details. Keep in mind, it's B.Y.O.B—Bring Your Own Boo.

When Bowser doesn't score an invitation to an around-the-world party cruise with Mario and his good-time-loving pals, the stage is set for party-crashing mayhem in Mario Party 7. This month's news isn't that the best-selling board-game series is returning to GCN for its annual gig, but that Nintendo (and those crazy development party animals at Hudson Soft) have stuffed the 2005 version with all sorts of tasty treats. Revelation number one is that fans will set sail for six exotic ports of call (aka boards), each one featuring unique gameplay, such as its own method of acquiring stars. On one board you'll find stars in treasure chests, and on another you'll have to place the highest bid on them. Entitled Grand Canal, Pagoda Peak, Pyramid Park, Neon Heights, Windmillville and Bowser's Enchanted Inferno, the six locales (with one obvious exception) are whimsical takes on real places. Revelation number two is that up to eight players can now join in the fun, and some of the minigames allow all eight to compete against each other with each pair of players sharing one controller. This year's affair also sees the addition of characters Birdo and Dry Bones, revamped tutorials and lots of unlockable prizes that you can buy with the mileage points you earn during your travels. As always, the life of the party is the minigame action, and Mario Party 7 boasts 86 all-new wacky games, 10 of which can be played using the packed-in microphone—or with controllers if everyone has lost their voices during the inevitable arguing over who gets to play as Peach and who gets to play as Yoshi. Lonely hearts can play alone in the Solo Cruise—call it practice—or challenge a friend or the CPU. Like last year's Party, MP7 is a quicker play than pre-MP6 versions, so things keep hopping. And if you want variety, the Deluxe Cruise includes Ice Battle tournaments and Delux Free Play, which offers open access to all 8-player minigames. Boarding call for the cruise is in early November.
—Scott P.

DON'T-MISS Calendar

The GCN, DS and GBA (and the GBA spinoff, the Micro) are in overdrive for the rest of '05—so where to begin? Here are few to get you warmed up!

9-26

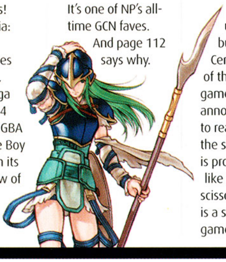
Witness the eeriest DS tale in Memory.
Inquiring minds want to know: Who's behind the gruesome events in Trace Memory? The touch-driven truth will chill your fingertip to the bone.

10-3

Like XD? Yeah, baby, yeah!
Pokémon XD travels back to the Shadow Pokémon dimension, where everyone looks like they're living in a '60s sci-fi flick. But is it more splendid than *Barbarella* and more fab than *Fantastic Voyage*? Sure—it's Snagadelic!

10-4

Killer day for DS and GBA.
Intense action owns Nintendo handhelds! Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow rises on the DS, while Mega Man Zero 4 grabs the GBA and Game Boy Micro with its brutal view of the Mega Man future.



10-17

Fire Emblem sears the GCN.
The tactics title has a rare distinction: It's one of NP's all-time GCN faves. And page 112 says why.

10-18

Get me a clean stylus—stat!
Now loads of developers are dreaming up DS titles, but Trauma Center was one of the first games announced in '04 to really run with the stylus. Which is probably a lot like running with scissors, since TC is a surgery game.

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GAME WATCH FORECAST

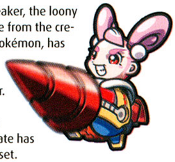
Forecast climbed to the top of the tallest tree and scouted the horizon—near and far—for all of the games on the way. No surprise: a lot o' dots are on the shift with the annual invasion of fall and holiday releases coming up. Which games are closer to swarming your local stores?

Announced
In Development
Ready for Release

Game Title Publisher ●●●
Game Title Publisher ●●● — New games added to the list

Wondering when Shadow will be hedgehogging the spotlight? Sega has now pinned down his high-ammo stepout for a November release.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE		
American Chopper: Full Throttle	Activision	●○○
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Battalion Wars	Nintendo	●●●
Bratz Rock Angelz	THQ	●●○
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2	Activision	●○○
Cabela's Outdoor Adventures	Activision	●●○
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	Activision	●●○
Chaos Field Expanded	0~3	●●○
Chibi Robo	Nintendo	●●○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●○
Crash Tag Team Racing	VU Games	●●○
Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix	Nintendo	●●○
Disney/Pixar's The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ	●●○
Disney's Chicken Little	Disney	●●○
Ed, Edd n Eddy: The Mis-Edventures	Midway	●●○
FIFA Soccer 06	EA	●●●
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance	Nintendo	●●●
Frogger: Ancient Shadow	Konami	●●●
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball	Activision	●○○
Gun	Activision	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●○
James Bond 007: From Russia with Love	EA	●●○
Karaoke Revolution Party	Konami	●●○
Kirby*	Nintendo	●●○
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	Nintendo	●●○
LEGO *Star Wars* The Video Game	Eidos	●●○
Mario Party 7	Nintendo	●●○
Mark Davis Pro Bass Challenge	Natsume	●●○
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	EA	●●●
Mega Man X Collection	Capcom	●●○
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	Midway	●●●
Mini-Golf Mayhem	Crave	●○○
The Movies	Activision	●●○
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary	Namco	●●●
NBA Live 06	EA	●●○
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●●○
NHL 06	EA	●●○
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	THQ	●●○
Nintendo Pennant Chase Baseball	Nintendo	●●○
Odama	Nintendo	●●○
One Piece: Grand Battle	Bandai	●●●
Pac-Man World 3	Namco	●●○
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	●●○
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness	Nintendo	●●●
Prince of Persia 3*	Ubisoft	●●○
Rampage: Total Destruction	Midway	●●○
Room Zoom: Race for Impact	Jaleco	●●○
Scooby-Doo! Unmasked	THQ	●●●
Shadow the Hedgehog	Sega	●●○
Shrek Superslam	Activision	●●○
The Sims 2	EA	●●○
Sonic Riders	Sega	●●○
Spartan: Total Warrior	Sega	●●●
SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, Pants!	THQ	●●○
SSX on Tour	EA	●●○
Starcraft: Ghost	VU Games	●●○
Super Mario Strikers	Nintendo	●●○
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	THQ	●●●
Teen Titans	Majesco	●●○
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	Konami	●●○
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06	EA	●●●
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter	Ubisoft	●○○
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Lockdown	Ubisoft	●●●
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 4*	Ubisoft	●○○
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	Activision	●●○
True Crime: New York City	Activision	●●○
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan	Activision	●●○
Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision	●●○
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	Capcom	●●○
World Championship Poker	Crave	●○○
World Series of Poker	Activision	●○○
WWE: Day of Reckoning 2	THQ	●●●
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	Activision	●●○
Zatch Bell!	Bandai	●●○



Screw Breaker, the loony GBA game from the creators of Pokémon, has been renamed Drill Dozer. No North American release date has yet been set.

GAME BOY ADVANCE		
Atomic Betty	Namco	●●○
Backyard Football 2006	Atari	●●●
Backyard Skateboarding 2006	Atari	●●○
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	Namco	●●●
The Bible Game	Crave	●●●
Bratz Rock Angelz	THQ	●●○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●○
Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy	THQ	●●●
Disney/Pixar's The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ	●●○
Disney's Chicken Little	Disney	●●○
Disney's Cinderella: Magical Dreams	Disney	●●○
Disney's Lizzie McGuire 3	Disney	●●●
Disney's That's So Raven 2	Disney	●●○
Disney's The Proud Family	Disney	●●○
DK: King of Swing	Nintendo	●●●
Donkey Kong Country 3	Nintendo	●●○
Dr. Mario/Puzzle League	Nintendo	●●○
Drill Dozer	Nintendo	●●○
Driv3r	Atari	●●○
Duel Masters 3*	Atari	●●○
Ed, Edd n Eddy: The Mis-Edventures	Midway	●●○
everGirl*	THQ	●●○
The Fairly OddParents!*	THQ	●●○
FIFA Soccer 06	EA	●●○
Gunstar Super Heroes	Sega	●●○
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue	Nintendo	●○○
Hardcore Pool	Telegames	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●○
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi*	D3PA	●○○
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco	●●○
Legend of the River King Advance	Natsume	●●○
LEGO Bionicle: Maze of Shadows	THQ	●●○
Mario Tennis: Power Tour	Nintendo	●●○
Mega Man Anniv. Collection	Capcom	●●○
Mega Man Zero 4	Capcom	●●○
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary	Namco	●●●
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●○○
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	THQ	●●○
One Piece	Bandai	●●●
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	●●○
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
Rebelstar: Tactical Command	Namco	●●●
Santa Claus Saves the Earth	Telegames	●●○
Scooby-Doo! Unmasked	THQ	●●●
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Sea World: Shamu's Deep Sea Adventures	Activision	●●○
Shrek Superslam	Activision	●●○
The Sims 2	EA	●●○
Sky Dancers*	Crave	●○○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, Pants!	THQ	●●○
Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go!	Disney	●○○
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	THQ	●●●
Teen Titans	Majesco	●●○
Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King	Disney	●●○
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	Activision	●●○
Top Spin 2	2K Sports	●○○
Trollz: Hair Affair	Ubisoft	●●○
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan	Activision	●●○
Ultimate Arcade Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision	●●○
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○
Whac-A-Mole	Activision	●●○
W.I.T.C.H.	Disney	●●●
Winx Club	Konami	●●○
World Poker Tour 2K6	2K Sports	●○○
World Reborn	Destination	●●○
X-Bladez: Inline Skater	Crave	●●○
Xyanide	Playlogic	●○○

Majesco will make very-early '06 huge for the DS with three titles now due in January—Age of Empires: The Age of Kings, Bust-a-Move DS and Guilty Gear Dust Strikers.

NINTENDO DS		
A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	●●○
Age of Empires: The Age of Kings	Majesco	●●○
Animal Crossing: Wild World	Nintendo	●●○
ATV Quad Fury 2	Majesco	●●○
Barnyard	THQ	●○○
Battles of Prince of Persia*	Ubisoft	●●○
Black & White Creatures	Majesco	●●○
Blades of Thunder 2	SummitSoft	●●○
Boktai*	Konami	●○○
Brain Twisting Game Vol. 1*	Aruze	●●○
Burnout Legends	EA	●●○
Bust-a-Move DS	Majesco	●●○
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow	Konami	●●●
ChoroQ DS	Atlus	●○○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●○
Crash Tag Team Racing	VU Games	●○○
Dig Dug: Digging Strike	Namco	●●○
Disney/Pixar's Finding Nemo*	THQ	●○○
Disney/Pixar's The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ	●●○
Disney's Kim Possible: Kimmunicator	Disney	●●○
Disney's Lizzie McGuire & That's So Raven*	Disney	●●○
Dragon Ball Z: Supersonic Warriors 2	Atari	●●○
Dragon Booster	Konami	●●○
Dragon Quest Monsters*	Square Enix	●○○
Dynasty Warriors*	Koei	●○○
Egg Monster Heroes	Square Enix	●●○
Electroplankton	Nintendo	●●○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
FIFA Soccer 06	EA	●●○
Final Fantasy III	Square Enix	●○○
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*	Square Enix	●○○
Fushigi No Dungeon*	Chun Soft	●○○
The Game of Life DS	Atlus	●○○
Golden Nugget Casino DS	Majesco	●●○
Guilty Gear Dust Strikers	Majesco	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●○
Harvest Moon DS*	Natsume	●●○
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi*	D3PA	●○○
Historical Simulation Game*	Koei	●○○
Intern Tendo Dokuta	Spike	●●○
Jam with the Band*	Nintendo	●●○
Johnny Rocketfingers	Conspiracy	●○○
Legend of the River King*	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*	Nintendo	●○○
Lost in Blue	Konami	●●●
Lunar: Dragon Song	Ubisoft	●●●
Mah-Jong*	Koei	●○○
Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time	Nintendo	●●○
Mario Kart DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	EA	●●○
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Double Team	Capcom	●●○
Metroid Prime Hunters	Nintendo	●●○
Metroid Prime Pinball	Nintendo	●●○
Mini RC Rally	SummitSoft	●●○
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed	Bandai	●○○
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	●○○
Moonlight Fables*	Majesco	●○○
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●●○
New Super Mario Bros.*	Nintendo	●●○
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	THQ	●●○
One Piece	Bandai	●●○
Organizer Plus	SummitSoft	●○○
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	●○○
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney	Capcom	●●●
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Disney	●○○
Quad Desert Fury 2	Majesco	●○○
Real Time Conflict: Shogun Empires	Namco	●●○
SBK: Snowboard Kids DS	Atlus	●●○
Scooby-Doo! Unmasked	THQ	●●●
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Sea World: Shamu's Deep Sea Adventures	Activision	●○○
Secret of Mana*	Square Enix	●○○
Shin Megami Tensei DS*	Atlus	●○○
Shrek Superslam	Activision	●●○
The Sims 2	EA	●●○
Slime Morimori Dragon Quest*	Square Enix	●○○
Sonic Rush	Sega	●●○
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	THQ	●●○
Spyro: Shadow Legacy	VU Games	●●○
Super Princess Peach	Nintendo	●●○
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	THQ	●●●
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	Konami	●●○
Texas Hold 'Em Poker	Majesco	●●○
Tony Hawk for DS*	Activision	●●○
Top Gun	Mastiff	●●○
Top Spin 2	2K Sports	●○○
Touch Golf DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Trace Memory	Nintendo	●●●
Trauma Center: Under the Knife	Atlus	●●○
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Spider-Man	Activision	●●○
Vandal Hearts*	Konami	●○○
Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble	Capcom	●●○
Whac-A-Mole	Activision	●●○
Winx Club	Konami	●○○
World Soccer Winning Eleven*	Konami	●○○
Worms*	THQ	●●○
Zoo Tycoon DS	THQ	●●●

* tentative title

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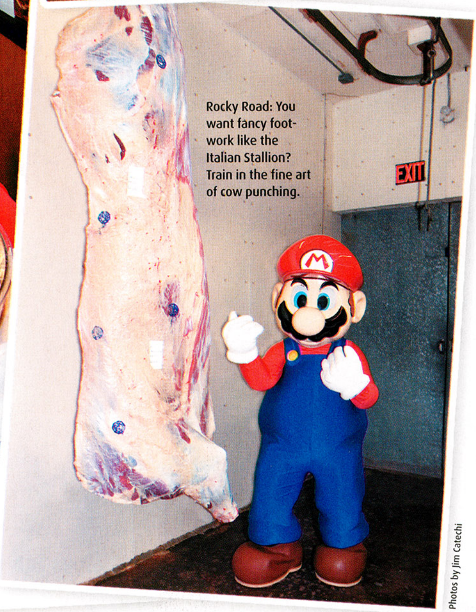
LET'S GET READY TO RUMBA!

EXERCISING HIS RIGHT TO BE FUNKY, MARIO IS PREPPING FOR DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION: MARIO MIX

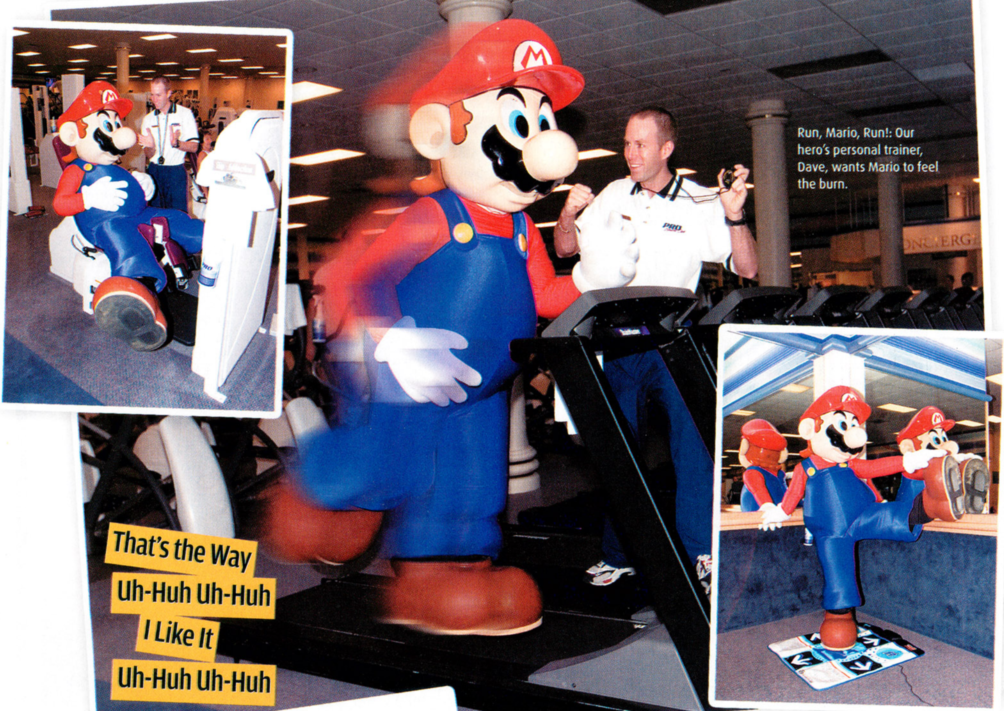
Carb Up: The mushrooms are power-ups. The meatballs are just plain delicious.

The Rhythm Method: There's a science to putting the left foot in and taking the left foot out.



Rocky Road: You want fancy footwork like the Italian Stallion? Train in the fine art of cow punching.

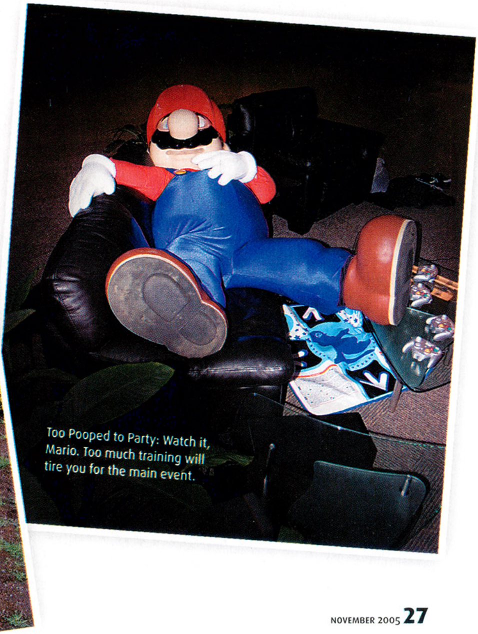
Photos by Jim Catechi



That's the Way Uh-Huh Uh-Huh I Like It Uh-Huh Uh-Huh

Run, Mario, Run!: Our hero's personal trainer, Dave, wants Mario to feel the burn.

Body and Spirit: A peaceful setting, Triangle pose and dance pad—He finds his center.



Too Pooped to Party: Watch it, Mario. Too much training will tire you for the main event.

From the Big Red One to a Red Hot Rumble.
From NYC to the American Wasteland.
Previews span the gaming globe.

True Crime: New York City Pg. 28
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One Pg. 29
Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble Pg. 30
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland Pg. 32
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble Pg. 33
The Chronicles of Narnia Pg. 33
Super Mario Strikers Pg. 34
Donkey Kong Country 3 Pg. 34
The Sims 2 Pg. 36

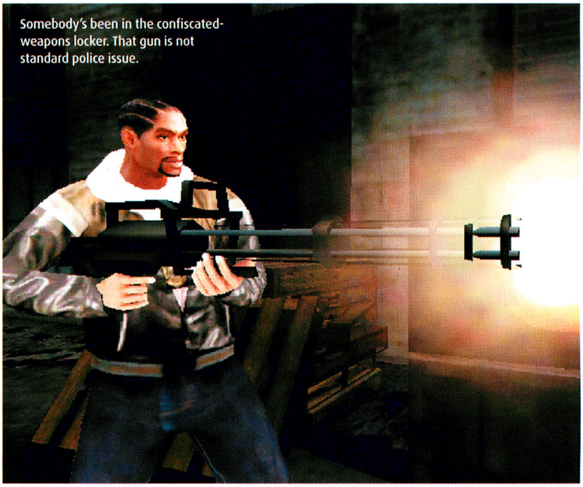
Crime Plays

>TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY

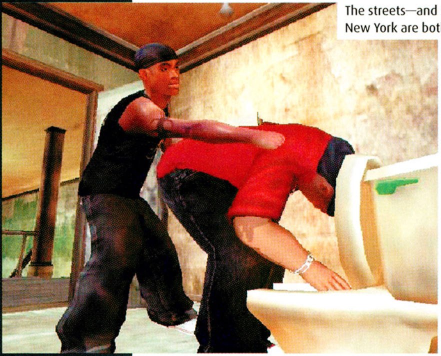
PLATFORM: **GCN** • PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **LUXOFLUX** • RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2005**

The Statue of Liberty is a blunt weapon. At least, a scaled-down replica of Lady Liberty is as good as a baseball bat in Big Apple battler True Crime: New York City. A table leg, a broken bottle, a grenade launcher and a police-issue pistol all come in handy for street-hustler-turned-lawman Marcus Reed as he fights to take down a quartet of crime syndicates in a tale of justice and revenge with a street-by-street reproduction of Manhattan as its backdrop. Although New York City is smaller than the sprawl of Los Angeles (the setting for the first True Crime title), Reed's concrete-jungle playground is rich in detail and neighborhood style, plus he can walk into virtually every building on the island.

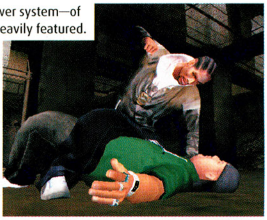
To make his way from one crime scene to the next, the cagey cop commandeers vehicles, runs, takes the subway or hires a cab. Perps make their presence known everywhere, and Reed's captain (voiced by *Law & Order SVU*'s Mariska Hargitay) points him in the direction of local lawlessness. To stay on the trail of the main baddies, Reed gets clues from a mysterious informant (voiced by Christopher Walken, who played a different role in Streets of L.A.) and a cast of lowlifes and scumbags who help him if he completes various side missions. The path the character takes to the end goal is up to you. Reed can follow the straight and narrow—turn in evidence as he finds it, make clean arrests and work his way up the promotion ladder—or he can play "bad cop" and sell evidence for cash to buy seriously dangerous weapons on the black market. Your decisions either help clean up the city or turn it into a crime-infested cesspool. Whatever way you go, you can do it to a soundtrack that features about 80 licensed tunes, each of which captures the New York state of mind.—GEORGE S.

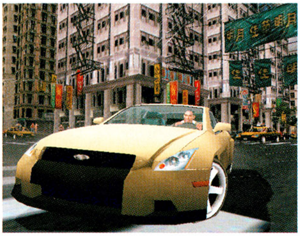


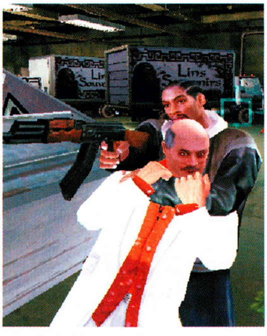
Somebody's been in the confiscated-weapons locker. That gun is not standard police issue.



The streets—and sewer system—of New York are both heavily featured.







What kind of detergent do you use? Your coat is so silky soft and laundry fresh.

Theater of Operations

>CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: ACTIVSION
DEVELOPER: TREYARCH • RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2005

Big Red One follows the story of five men who belong to the U.S. Army's First Infrantry division as they participate in three of the most pivotal missions of World War II. But in true cinematic fashion, the story goes well beyond events on the screen. The tale is as much about the personal maturation and trust of the tight-knit group of infantrymen as it is about liberating Europe from the clutches of the Nazi regime. Onscreen, the characters show a wide range of emotions that adapt and change throughout the game. And as casualties mount and soldiers fresh out of boot camp join the squad, you can see how much the longest-tenured members have grown in such a short time.

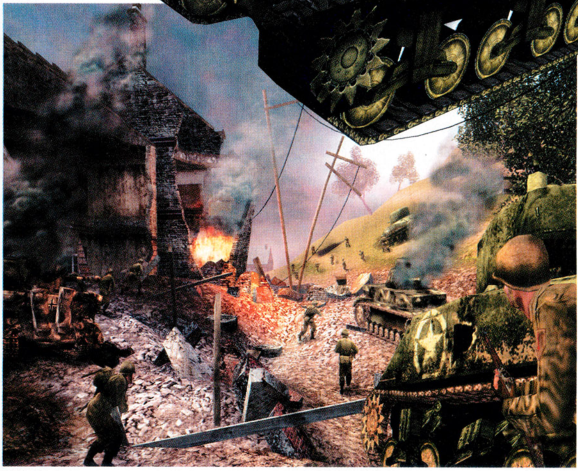
To capture the finer elements of group dynamics, the development team took a few unprecedented steps in video game production. First, they hired professional actors who have played roles as soldiers similar to the characters in Big Red One; several of the actors starred in the WWII miniseries *Band of Brothers*, including Frank John Hughes and Michael Cudlitz. Then, for all the cinematic scenes, the actors performed their motion-capture sessions together on a single stage, and all voice recording was done simultaneously. The voice recording was said to be particularly stressful because of the amount of yelling they had to do. The result is an incredible connection between the onscreen characters—they pat each other on the back, lean on nearby jeep fenders and look directly into each other's eyes as they talk. It might not sound like a dramatic step in video game innovation, but these kinds of subtleties are startling compared to other games.

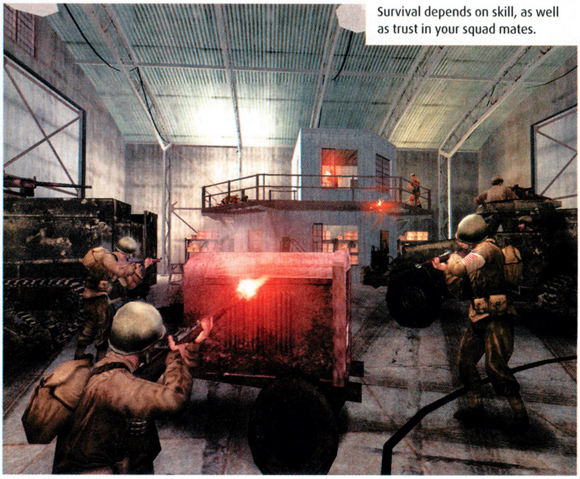
To further accentuate the cinematic approach to Big Red One, the development team hired movie-music composer Graeme Revell. Revell has worked on recent blockbuster films such as *Sin City* and *The Chronicles of Riddick*, and he wrote the score to the first *Tomb Raider* movie. The game's dramatic score sets an epic tone that gives serious weight to the story and the gritty reality the game developers are trying to portray.

Keeping with the wartime theme, cut-scenes of mock newsreel clips foretell upcoming missions. Returning to the video game world, actor Mark Hamill does all of the narration for these scenes. After showing vocal talent on countless roles for various animated series and video games over the past decade, Hamill seems like a natural fit to narrate Big Red One.

Call of Duty: Big Red One comes to theaters . . . err, store shelves, in mid-November. —CHRIS S.

The 1st Infantry division is one of the oldest and most decorated units in American military history.





Survival depends on skill, as well as trust in your squad mates.

The Fullest View Ever?

>VIEWTIFUL JOE: DOUBLE TROUBLE

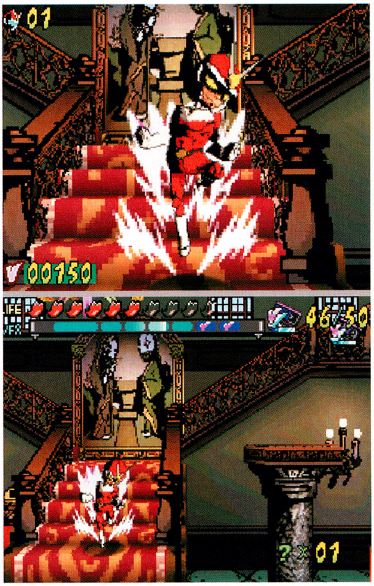
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CLOVER STUDIO • RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2005

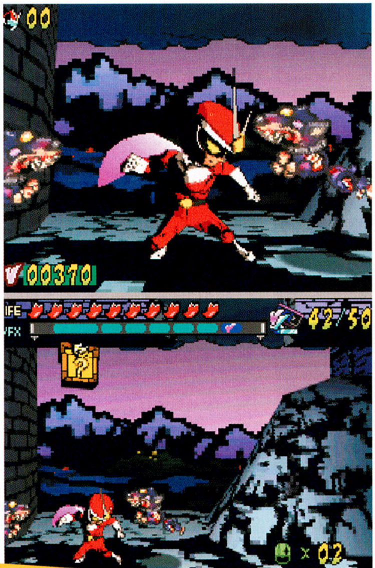
He's the only console superhero who stood up for innovation this generation. Viewtiful Joe has done his part for the 2-D cause, used his superpowers to transform the action side-scroller and led the charge for comic-art style in games. So it's no surprise that, after bathing in the DS's mutagenic energies, the hero will show off more groundbreaking powers—and do the DS proud.

If you've played previous VJ games, you'll be glad to hear that the essentials are making the leap to the DS with shocking fidelity. The 2-D designs, plus the 3-D intrusions that jut into side-scrolling space, are all just as bizarre and colorful. Though VJDT is set in a theme park in Joe's "real world," not the usual movie fantasyland, you'll still run through stages that look like a jumble of movie props, fake scenery and backdrops. All action runs simultaneously on both DS screens—one showing a zoomed-out view, the other showing a beautiful close-up.

The dual view isn't just for eye candy. It's core to the hero's new powers, which join old faves like his slow-mo skill, not to mention standard punching, kicking and jumping. For the new Slide power, you'll use your finger to flick the zoomed-out view to the upper screen, which bumps the zoomed-in view down to the touch screen. Many foes caught in the zoom are paralyzed with fear, and you can pull off more-powerful kicks and punches on them—akin to the console games' Zoom In power. There's a second benefit: You can also then use the Touch power to manipulate stuff, not only flipping switches and turning cranks, but finger-stabbing foes that can be destroyed no other way. When you want the views to switch back, simply flick the touch screen again.

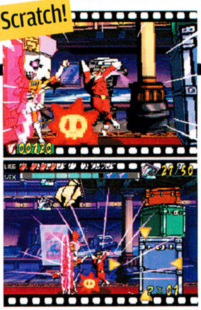
When the zoomed-out is on the lower screen, you'll use DS touch control to perform Scratch and Split. With the Scratch move (a misnomer, since you just wobble your finger), you can shake the stage to cause props to fall on your enemies. But Split is the craziest move. By drawing your finger across the scene, you'll divide it, then you can shift the upper half sideways—"editing" it, in VJ's movie-obsessed way. Need to move a statue stuck atop a pillar, or wish that ceiling vacuum could suck up a pile of junk to its left? Split then drag to bend reality. Tap the upper screen or jump high into it to make the scene's halves snap back together. If you use Split even more creatively, you'll find that you can split buildings in two to enter them and perform extralong leaps. The potential is huge, and just a taste of the DS superpowers has left us craving more of Viewtiful Joe's evolution. —STEVEN G.



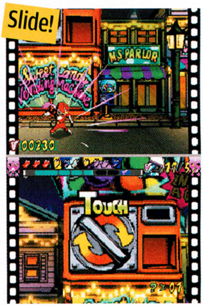


Viewtiful Joe will also roast Resident Evil on the DS, where he'll wake the dead with Scratch, Slide and Split.

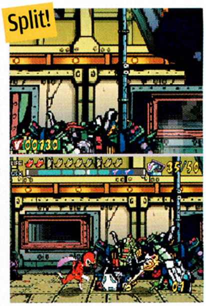
Scratch!

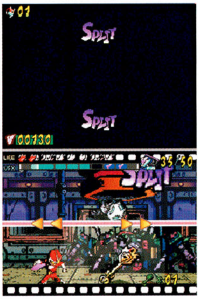


Slide!



Split!





Split allows you to slash the lower screen's reality in half, then drag the upper portion left or right—to move heavy machinery where you want it, for example.

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I'm saying that with time you will see that things aren't so black and white.

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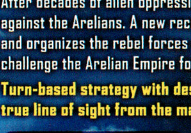
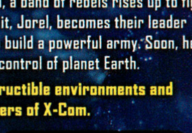
Turn-based strategy with destructible environments and true line of sight from the makers of X-Com.

GAMESPOT E3 2005 EDITORS' CHOICE FINALIST





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Lords of Hawktown

>TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: NEVERSOFT • RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2005

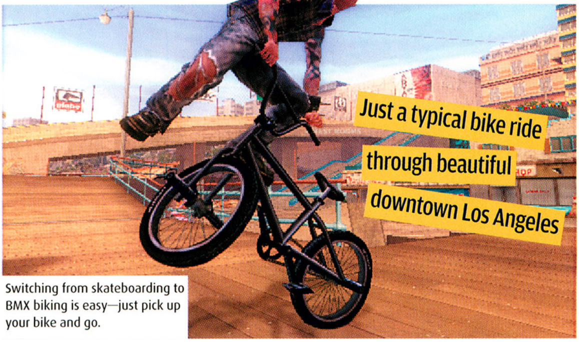
Rather than giving the Hawk franchise yet another tune-up, Neversoft performed a complete overhaul in the form of Tony Hawk's American Wasteland. Not only have the developers added a whole new sport to the mix (BMX biking); they've revamped the level design into an open-ended sandbox experience that sets it apart from any other Hawk title. But don't fret—the Hawk engine we all know and love is still present, and with some sweet new additions.

THAW's story begins as you choose one of five characters to move from the midwest to the big city of Los Angeles. Many of the game's early objectives revolve around changing your character's out-of-touch appearance, which can be done at local barber shops, clothing stores and tattoo parlors. After a few run-ins with some famous skaters (Ryan Sheckler, Tony Alva) and BMX bikers (Rick Thorne, Mat Hoffman), you'll find yourself on a mission to revive the glory days of skateboarding in L.A.

American Wasteland's setting provides a seamless playground for busting great combos, but the coolest locale is the Skate Ranch—essentially a skate park that grows and grows as you complete THAW's objectives. Throughout L.A., you'll find over 40 structural pieces that can be hauled off to the ranch. And once you find them all, you'll have what could be a contender for the best park ever skated in a Hawk game. And the ranch is customizable—you can turn each piece on and off to make for different skateboard and BMX combo possibilities.

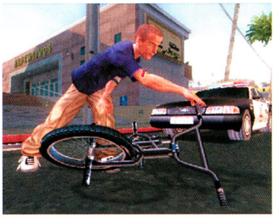
The skateboarding in THAW plays like it does in previous Hawk games, with some supplementals. The biggest is the bert slide, a surfing-like maneuver that consists of balancing your character while weaving back and forth low to the ground. You can use the move to connect runs and create new combos (as with the manual). Other new tricks include the grind stall, which lets you pause midgrind to perform modifiers, and the double roll. And the lackluster natas spin introduced in THUG 2 has been redefined in THAW, allowing you to perform a variety of modifiers while spinning.

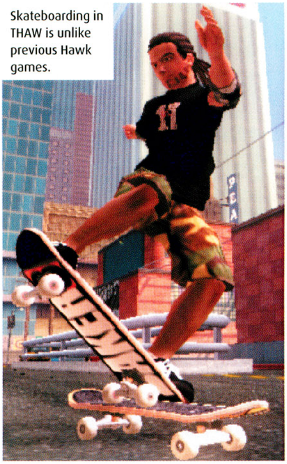
Riding a BMX bike in THAW is like playing a completely different game. The bike has its own physics, and the BMX trick system relies mostly on the C Stick rather than button combinations. For a franchise that has always been about skateboarding, the inclusion of biking is huge. But with or without the bikes, THAW's got enough new offerings to keep even the old-schoolest of Hawk fans interested. —ANDY M.



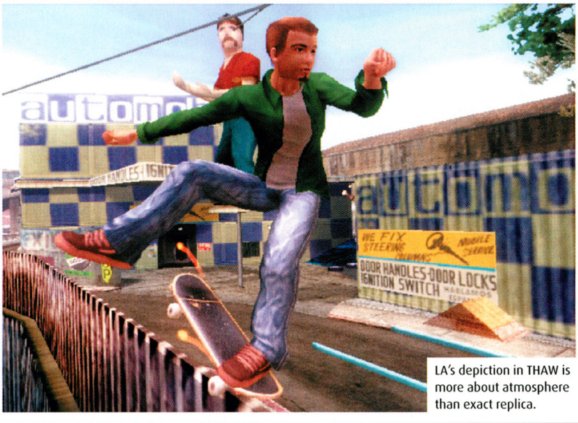
Just a typical bike ride through beautiful downtown Los Angeles

Switching from skateboarding to BMX biking is easy—just pick up your bike and go.





Skateboarding in THAW is unlike previous Hawk games.



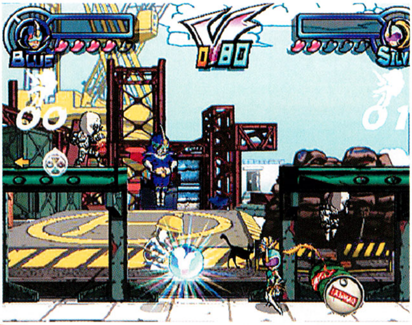
LA's depiction in THAW is more about atmosphere than exact replica.

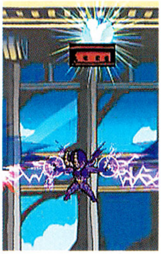
Too Hot to Handle

>VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE

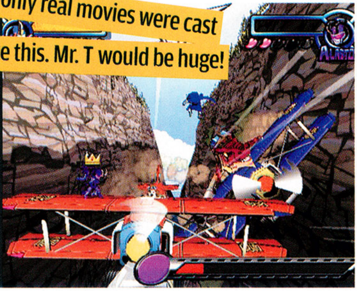
PLATFORM: **GCN** • PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
DEVELOPER: **CLOVER STUDIO** • RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2005**

If you thought Joe's previous games were weird, you ain't seen nothing yet. His latest foray on the GCN is a chaotic four-player free-for-all in the vein of Super Smash Bros. Rather than simply knocking out your opponents, however, your objective is to fight the most "viewtifully," as measured by the number of coins you amass. Though you can always beat the currency out of your fellow combatants, each stage offers plenty of other opportunities to add to your total, from snarfing hamburgers to smashing flower pots (told you it was weird). To accommodate the multiplayer action, VFX Powers are limited to the occasional pickup (it could get pretty annoying if other players were constantly slowing things down by activating their powers). You can also nab a Super VFX Orb, which, when thrown, creates a dimensional rift that sucks you and your opponents into a brief minigame. Did we mention that it's weird? —STEVE T.

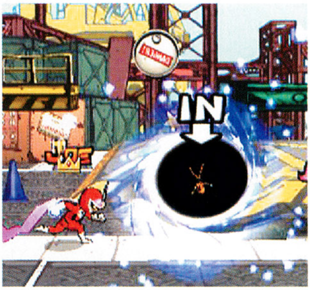




The multiplayer action in Red Hot Rumble is fast and furious. And very weird.



If only real movies were cast like this. Mr. T would be huge!

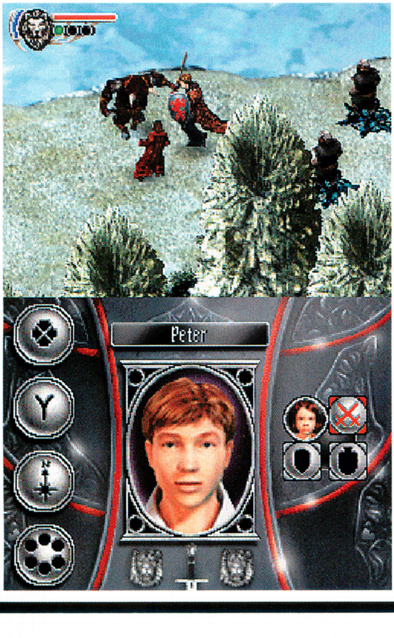


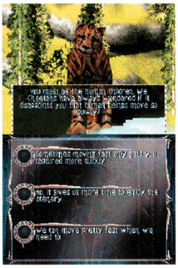
Book Smarts

>THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **BUENA VISTA**
DEVELOPER: **GRIPTONITE GAMES**
RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2005**

The long-awaited movie based on C.S. Lewis's classic book is slated for release in December, but Buena Vista is bringing GCN, DS and GBA versions of The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe to store shelves almost a full month earlier. Unlike the purely action-oriented GCN and GBA versions, the DS game is a hack-and-slash-style action/RPG (the first of its kind on the DS) with 45 quests totalling 15-20 hours of gameplay. The game lets you play as all four children, and boasts a wireless multiplayer mode. Each child has different strengths and weaknesses, with individual stats that players can build up over time. An internal clock keeps track of night, day and even seasons, which change the environments drastically—an icy path becomes a raging river, for example. Throughout their adventure in Narnia, the children will meet a variety of creatures that players can interact with in different ways, including buying and selling weapons, calling for help in battle, or recruiting into Aslan's army. —ANDY M.





You must be the human children. We Cheetahs have always wondered if it disappoints you that human beings move so slowly?

Sometimes moving fast only gets you captured more quickly

No, it gives us more time to enjoy the scenery.

We can move pretty fast when we need to.

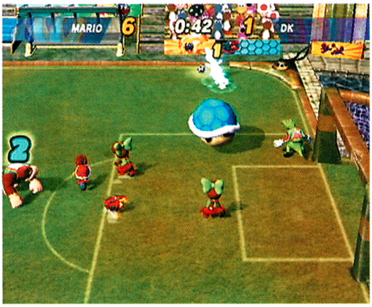
Animals speak. You select from multiple-choice responses.

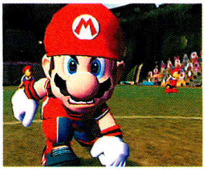
Mario Kicks

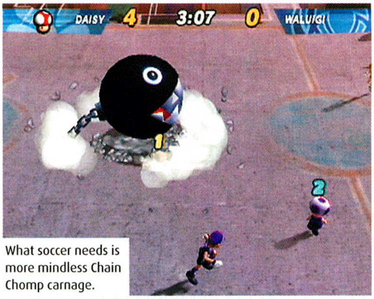
>SUPER MARIO STRIKERS

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NEXT LEVEL GAMES
RELEASE: DECEMBER 2005

For those of us who think *real* football is played with helmets and pads, soccer sims such as the FIFA series may seem (how can I put this politely?) a bit foreign. But every once in a while a soccer game comes along that shakes our football bias to the core. Sega Soccer Slam, with its over-the-top moves and charismatic teams, proved that soccer can be fun. Now Super Mario Strikers—created by the same folks who developed SSS—is headed to the GCN with even crazier action than its predecessor. Team captains include Mario, Donkey Kong, Peach and other Mushroom Kingdom regulars, who are all ticked off at each other and itching to compete in grudge matches. Attitude is big in SMS. When you power up a kick or a tackle, you'll earn special items, such as shells, bananas and Chain Chomps, to use against your opponent; it's particularly evil if you attack just as the opposition is about to score. Another great twist is the electrified sideline, which will toast any character that gets knocked into it. With four-player action and eight Cup Battles, SMS may make you think twice about what's *real* football. —SCOTT P.







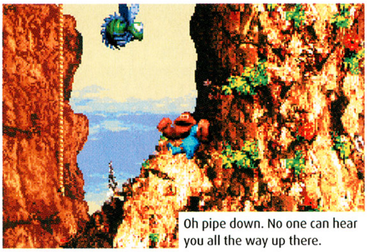
What soccer needs is more mindless Chain Chomp carnage.

Kiddy Game

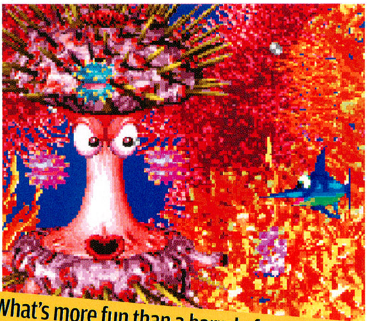
>DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 3

PLATFORM: GBA • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: RARE • RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2005

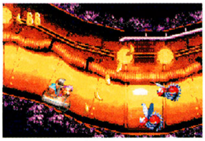
The Donkey Kong Country series broke ground graphically when its three titles hit SNES owners in the mid '90s, and the last installment's transition to the portable screen looks better than ever. In addition to the 40-plus levels found in the original, Dixie and Kiddy Kong can explore Pacifica, an all-new world with six levels, in the GBA update. And unlike the many ports that make players finish the game to unlock new content, DKC3 lets you visit Pacifica once you have the Turbo-Ski, about halfway through the game. You can save more often this time, but the levels, including the new ones, can be brutal (although there's a certain amount of sadistic pleasure involved in watching whiner Kiddy fall 100 feet to his doom). The whole menagerie of animal helpers returns to see you through otherwise untraversable spots . . . or just to take you for a joyride—your choice. As Steve pointed out in his "2-D or Not 2-D" feature last month, some games just work better in fewer dimensions. DKC3 is one of them. —JESSICA J.S.

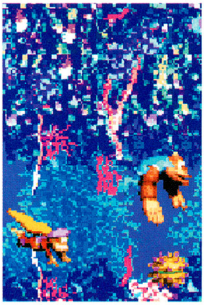


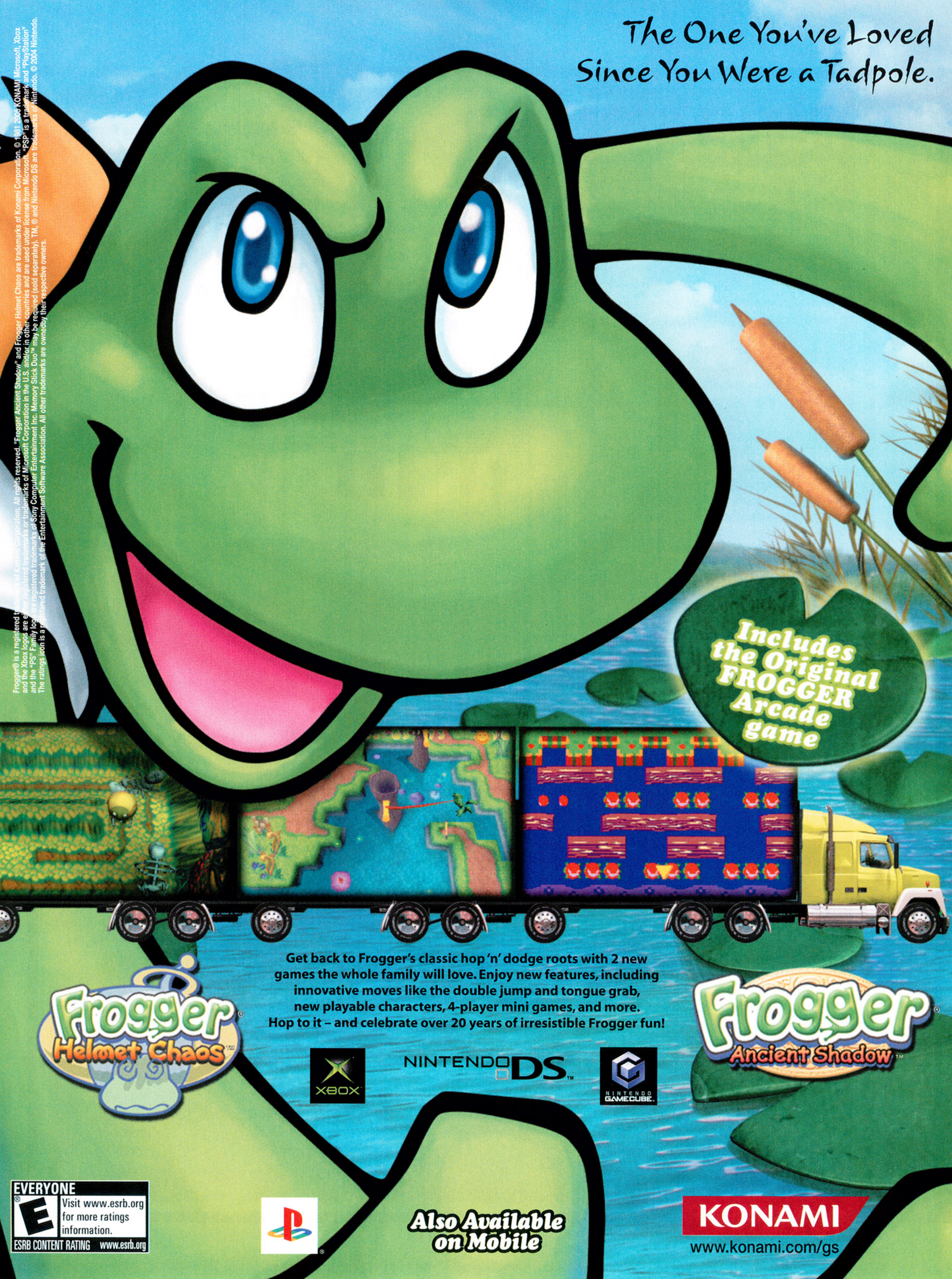
Oh pipe down. No one can hear you all the way up there.



What's more fun than a barrel of monkeys?



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People Are Strange

>THE SIMS 2

Uppity guests. Alien autopsies. Nuclear power.
The Strangetown Hotel lives up to its rep.
Just as much as Sims 2 does the DS.

PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **MAXIS/AMAZE** • RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2005**

DS and Sims, sittin' in a tree? It's a match made in heaven, given the crazy Sims 'tude and the crazy-enabling DS. Whereas the Urbz was more of a GBA game in DS drag, The Sims 2 is the real deal, fully conceived with touch, dual views, mic use and wireless features.

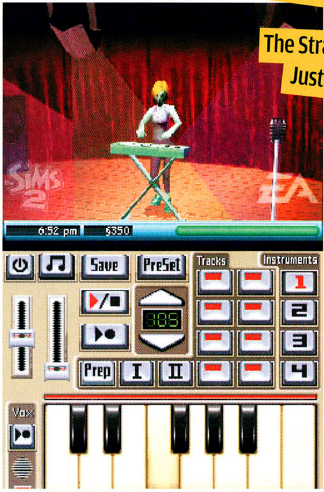
Focused on the core Sims value of letting players create their own world, the DS version is radically different from the GCN and GBA versions, stranding the player in Strangetown, where you end up running a hotel. The place is a dump when you show up—no guests, few furnishings, rooms locked up—but you'll turn it into a joint where you customize rooms with lots of furniture (using an intuitive drag-and-drop system), hobnob with guests to make them happy and work your butt off to please the high-maintenance bosslike VIP guests.

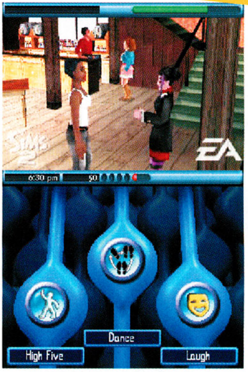
Along the way, you'll open up more of the locked rooms, most of them DS-centric: In the lounge, you'll mix soundtracks that you can pipe into guest rooms with touch control and the mic. In the gallery, you'll create paintings with the stylus. The casino lets you tap through a simple card game. The arcade is where you play skewed takes on old classics like Breakout. The subbasement is overrun with rats, which you'll exterminate with a touch-directed boomerang. The list goes on and on—EA has gone all out to create the feeling that your creative juices run the whole place.

Fortunately, you won't have urgencies bogging down the flow. In earlier GCN and GBA Sims games, the incessant need to pee, eat, sleep and be sanitary were each shown as a nagging meter. (Micromanagement migraines!) But in the new DS game, they've all been combined into one Sanity meter, which EA promises won't run down nearly as fast. Great news. Running a hotel and roaming Strangetown (a store, jail and saloon are all within walking distance) plus the desert (where aliens, mummies and fuel rods abound), gives you lots to do without obsessing about your bodily functions.

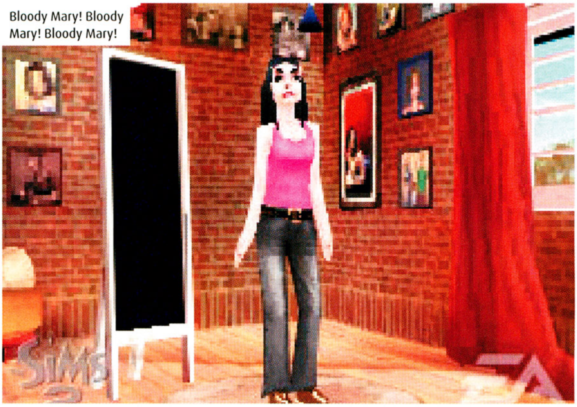
Blabbing with people has also gotten an overhaul: rather than driving relationships higher or lower by burning through repetitive text-menu options, the game focuses on physical communication. When facing a character on the upper screen and watching them for physical cues (happy? sad? manic?), you'll tap one of several physical communication options for that specific situation. It's an eye-opening new system, though it sometimes makes you wish you'd gone to mime school.

There's much more to this fascinating DS experience, like wireless item trading, real-time effects and alien autopsies, and we can't wait until the Sims-DS lovechild struts its stuff. —STEVEN G.

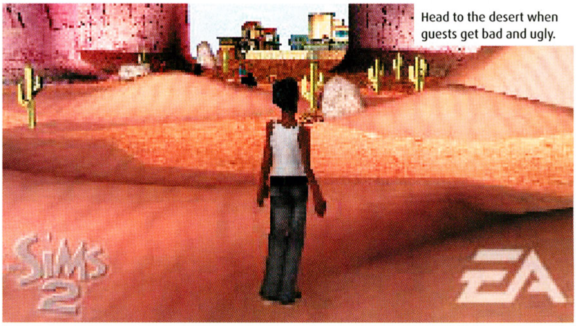




Bloody Mary! Bloody Mary! Bloody Mary!



Head to the desert when guests get bad and ugly.



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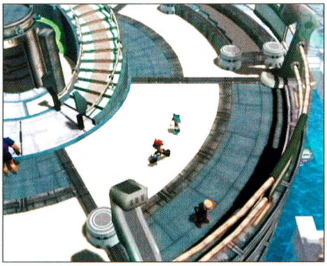
Out of the Shadows

Crime syndicate Cipher plans to use Shadow Pokémon to upset the peace of Orre in Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness!

By Chris Shepperd

Five years have passed since Team Snagem stirred up trouble in Orre and residents first learned of the Cipher organization. The last incident brought Shadow Pokémon to the area for the first time. Now Cipher returns, set once again to use Shadow Pokémon to create havoc across the peaceful land. It's up to you to uncover the group's nefarious plans. This month, we travel all over Orre and learn the secrets behind Cipher, as well as check out some of the new and wonderful attractions the region has to offer.



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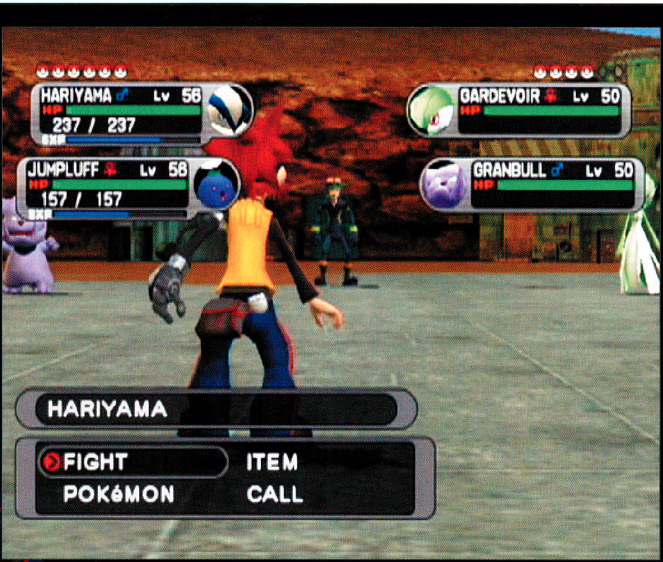
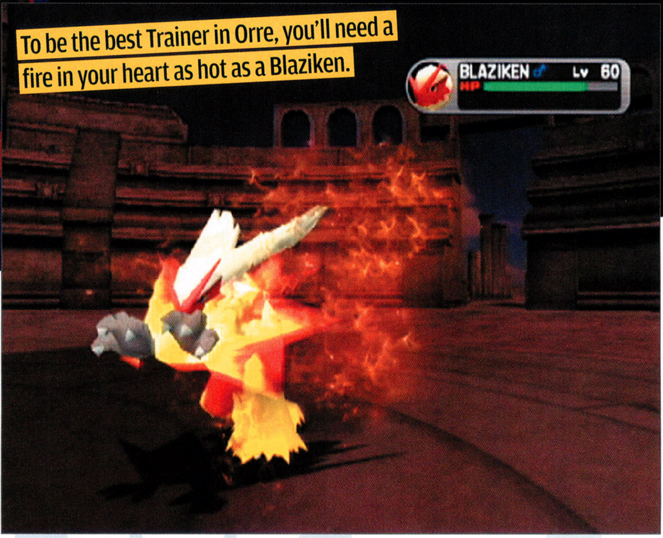

HARIYAMA ♂ Lv 56
HP 237 / 237
EXP
JUMPLUFF ♀ Lv 58
HP 157 / 157
EXP
GARDEVOIR ♀ Lv 50
HP
GRANBULL ♂ Lv 50
HP
HARIYAMA
FIGHT
ITEM
POKéMON
CALL


To be the best Trainer in Orre, you'll need a fire in your heart as hot as a Blaziken.

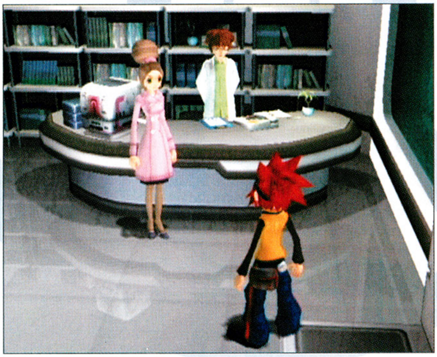
BLAZIKEN ♂ Lv 60
HP

Strange Things Are Afoot

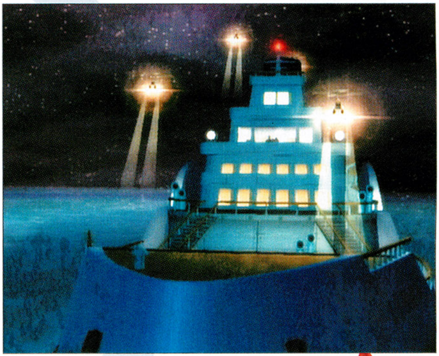
Amid the hustle and bustle of the Orre region, strange events are taking place, and they're as much of a mystery to the locals as they are to you. To get the full story, you'll have to piece together the recent events by talking with everyone you meet.

BE A PEOPLE PERSON

Despite the many evils lurking in Orre, the region is filled mostly with kind, generous people. From Agate Village to Gateon Port, folks are always willing to lend a helping hand. But stay on the lookout for Cipher minions in disguise—you never know when and where the criminals could strike.

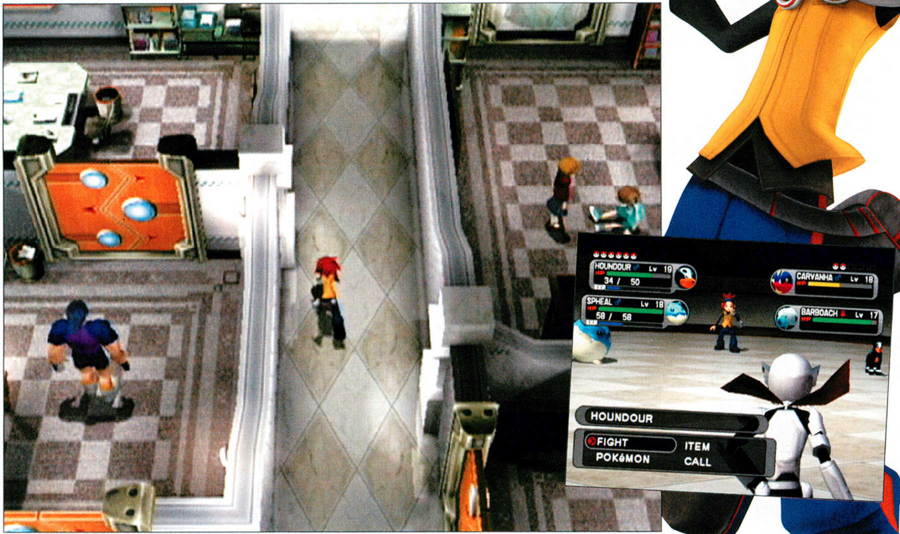


Professor Krane and your mom are top researchers at the Pokémon HQ Lab.



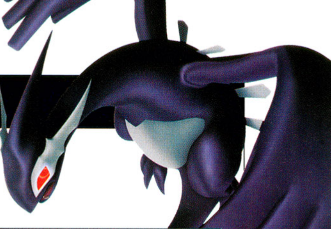
DRAMA ON THE HIGH SEAS

Even before you begin your adventure, signs of trouble appear. It seems that a giant cargo ship has disappeared off the coast of Orre. The contents of the ship are still unknown, but whatever it was carrying must have been important enough for enemies to steal the entire ship. To make matters more interesting, members of the ship's crew reported seeing the giant Pokémon Lugia in the area, and Lugia might have aided in the abduction of the ship.



Orre has changed over the years—there are many new areas to explore, and many more people to protect from Cipher.

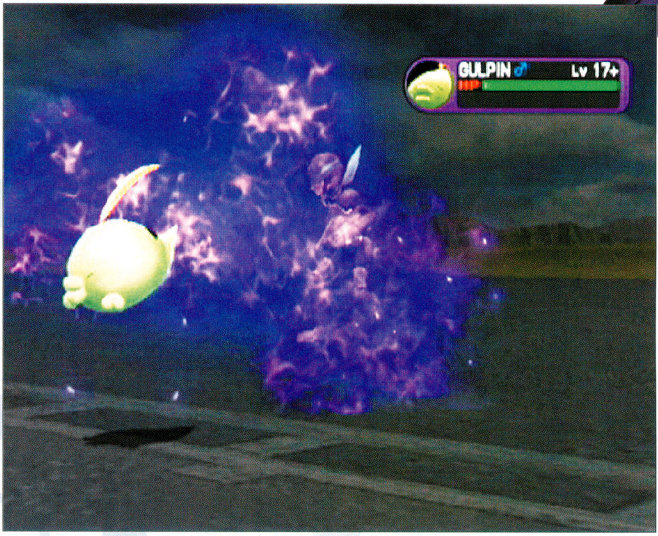
Shine Light into the Shadows



Nobody knows the true origins of the rare Shadow Pokémon. Their hearts have been sealed by some unknown force, and only honorable, compassionate Trainers are capable of reversing their fate. But now Cipher has found a way to close the hearts of all Pokémon—it is up to you to stop them!

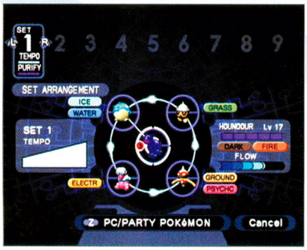
ILLUMINATING SHADOW POKéMON

A Pokémon's strength comes from the friendship and loyalty it feels toward its Trainer. But not all Pokémon have that bond. Shadow Pokémon are trained purely as fighting machines, effectively sealing their hearts from good and happiness. They have their own abilities, some of which are quite powerful, but they can't gain levels and Trainers cannot teach them new moves. Cipher's minions have taken advantage of the evil spirit within Shadow Pokémon, and have turned them into fighters for Cipher's own ends. Only with the Snag Machine can one wrest Shadow Pokémon from these villains. It's up to righteous Trainers to save these Pokémon from their eventual self-destruction.



ADVANCED PURIFICATION TECHNOLOGY

When Shadow Pokémon were first discovered, the process of purifying their souls was very restrictive—only one place in remote Orre could unlock the hearts of Shadow Pokémon. Thanks to the hard work of Professor Krane and his colleagues, you can now purify Pokémon at the Pokémon HQ Lab. The new Purify Chamber enlists the aid of regular Pokémon to help break the bonds that keep Shadow Pokémon in their sad condition. The chamber can purify many Shadow Pokémon simultaneously, saving critical time.



The Purify Chamber is very complex—try different combinations to discover its maximum effectiveness.

Out of the Darkness

Much has changed regarding Shadow Pokémon since the incidents that took place in Orre five years ago. Shadow Pokémon are much more versatile, but they're also more susceptible to damage from their own troubled souls.

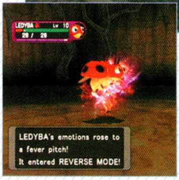
MOVE IT OR LOSE IT

Shadow Pokémon use a wide range of unique abilities. Many of the moves have non-Shadow counterparts—Shadow Hold has the same effect as the Normal-type move Block. You can't teach Shadow Pokémon new Shadow Moves, but they will learn natural moves during their trek toward purification.

SPHEAL ♂
Lv 17+
HP

THROW IT IN REVERSE

The notoriously temperamental Shadow Pokémon will occasionally go into Reverse mode and hurt themselves in their frenzy. If you Call out their name during battle, they'll calm down and take a giant leap toward shedding their Shadow status.



LEDYBA's emotions rose to a fever pitch!
It entered REVERSE MODE!

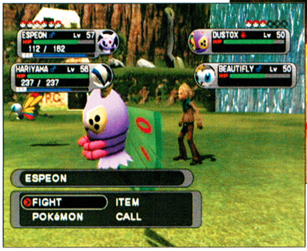
Call out to your Shadow Pokémon as soon as they go into Reverse mode, or they'll take extra damage each turn.

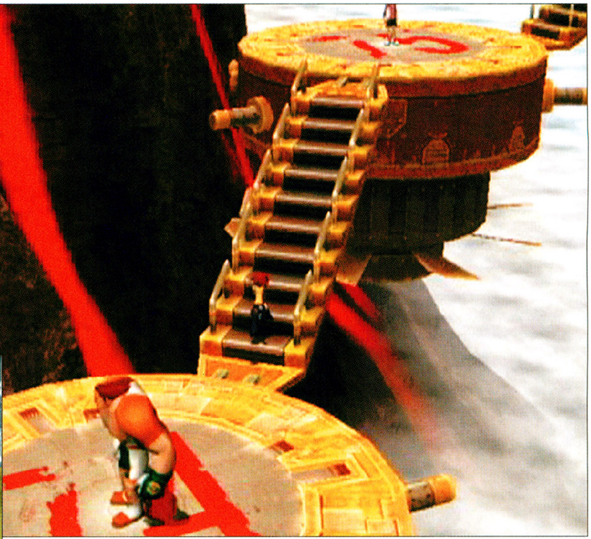
Competitive Nature

The members of the Cipher organization aren't going to take it easy on you just because you're a kid. Seek out battles so you can hone your skills and strengthen your Pokémon.

TOUGH TRAINERS AWAIT ON MT. BATTLE

All around Orre, Pokémon Trainers are looking for a quick battle. Unless you come face-to-face with a member of Cipher, expect to see few Shadow Pokémon in your opponents' ranks. You can also take part in organized competitions on Mt. Battle and elsewhere around the land.

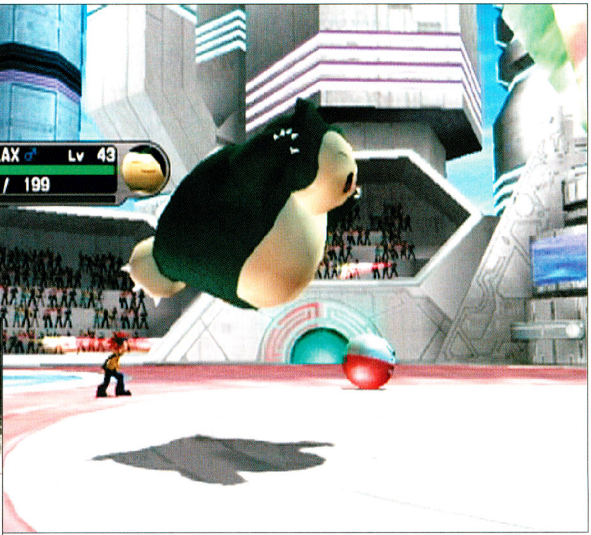

ESPEON Lv 57
112 / 162
HARIYAMA Lv 58
237 / 237
DUSTOX Lv 50
BEAUTIFLY Lv 50
ESPEON
FIGHT
ITEM
POKéMON
CALL



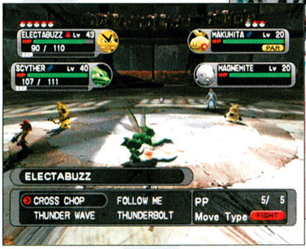
The floating platforms that spiral up the side of Mt. Battle feature opponents of gradually increasing difficulty. While you're there, try the Mt. Battle Knockout Battle Challenge—it's not only a test of your ability, but a great way for your Pokémon to gain valuable experience.

THREE TIMES THE CHALLENGE

Along with the random Trainers you'll find all over, Orre has a few colosseums to test your mettle. Pyrite Colosseum features low-level Trainers looking for a challenge. You'll face tougher Trainers in the new Realgam Tower. But if you're looking for a real challenge, head to Orre Colosseum. You won't be able to enter all of the colosseum competitions until you've chased Cipher out of Orre, but you'll be glad you had the extra time to train—these guys are tough.

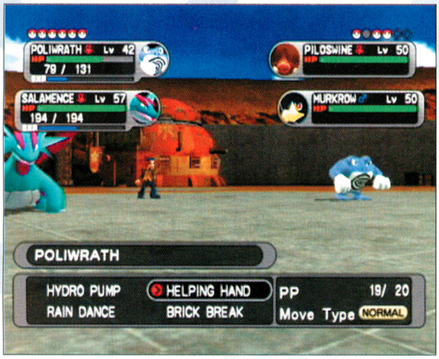

SNORLAX ♂ Lv 43
HP
199 / 199
EXP

It doesn't have to be a Shadow Snorlax to cast a huge shadow over its opponents.


ELECTABUZZ Lv 43
90 / 110
SCYTHER Lv 40
107 / 111
MAKUHITA Lv 20
PAR
MAGNEMITE Lv 20
ELECTABUZZ
CROSS CHOP
FOLLOW ME
THUNDER WAVE
THUNDERBOLT
PP 5/ 5
Move Type FIGHT

TWICE THE TROUBLE

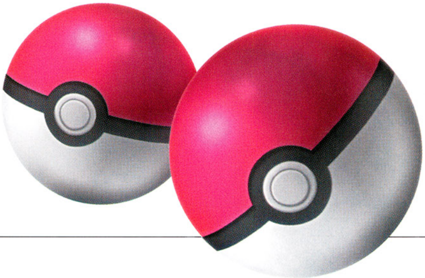
Nearly every encounter in Orre will be a Double Battle, meaning both you and your opponent will send two Pokémon into the fray at the same time. Double Battles can be a lot of fun, but they can also be maddeningly difficult. Your opponents know all the tricks to fighting in Double Battles—pay attention to their effective moves and put them in your playbook. You might even have to face two Shadow Pokémon at the same time, so prepare for tough challenges and be sure to carry plenty of Poké Balls!


POLIWRATH Lv 42
79 / 131
PILOSWINE Lv 50
SALAMENCE Lv 57
194 / 194
MURKROW Lv 50
POLIWRATH
HYDRO PUMP
HELPING HAND
RAIN DANCE
BRICK BREAK
PP 19/ 20
Move Type NORMAL

Select Pokémon that can cover each other's weaknesses and use moves that benefit them both. No pairing is without weakness, however—for example, a strong Electric-type attack could do serious damage to the duo shown here.

SHIFTRY Lv 60

Combo moves like having your first Pokémon use Sunny Day and the next use Solarbeam cause massive damage in one turn. Learn these moves well, because we can guarantee your opponents will use the same combos on you.

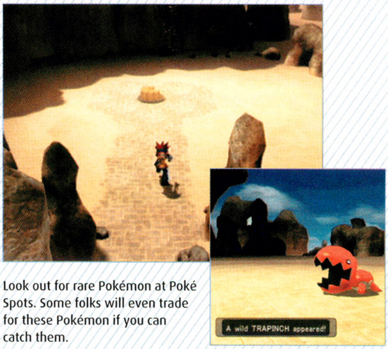


Party All the Time

Snagging Shadow Pokémon isn't the only way to build your party. Wild Pokémon and Pokémon transferred from other games will help cover the weaknesses of any team.

CALL OF THE WILD

Wild Pokémon have been spotted in Orre! They're a little shy, however—you'll have to leave Poké Snacks to lure them to special locations, called Poké Spots. A device called the Spot Monitor lets you know when a Pokémon comes out of hiding.

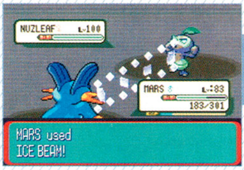


A wild TRAPINCH appeared!

Look out for rare Pokémon at Poké Spots. Some folks will even trade for these Pokémon if you can catch them.

FREE TRADE

Once you've taken care of the Cipher threat, you'll be able to bring Pokémon into XD from Pokémon Ruby, Sapphire, FireRed, LeafGreen and Emerald. Check out the rules at each of the Colosseums to see which Pokémon will be most valuable for you to import.


NUZLEAF L100
MARS L83
183/301

MARS used
ICE BEAM!

The attacks themselves don't change from the handheld versions to XD, but they'll sure look a lot cooler.

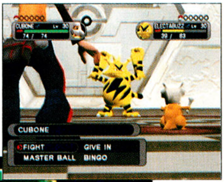
SWAMPERT Lv 83
301 / 301

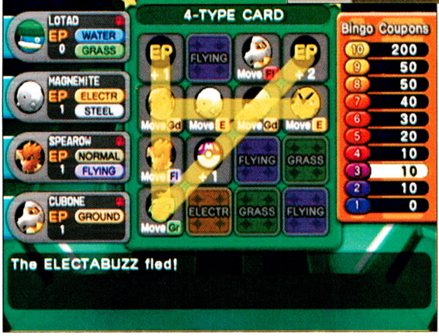
Money Can't Buy Happiness

In some parts of Orre, vendors won't accept the money you earn in battles. They will, however, accept Poké Coupons. You can earn Poké Coupons by taking on challenges in Mt. Battle or by winning at skill games in Realgam Tower. Look for salespeople willing to trade Poké Coupons for great items.

BATTLE BINGO

Inside Realgam Tower, you can compete in an intriguing competition to gain Poké Coupons. Starting with a single Pokémon, your goal is to create rows of won battles by defeating or capturing opponents. You can use the Pokémon you've caught to claim more squares. Bonus squares will keep your game going longer, which means more opportunity to fill the whole board.


CUBONE Lv 30
74 / 74
ELECTABUZZ Lv 30
39 / 83
CUBONE
FIGHT
GIVE IN
MASTER BALL
BINGO


4-TYPE CARD
LOTAD
EP 0
WATER
GRASS
MAGNEMITE
EP 1
ELECTR
STEEL
SPEAROW
EP 1
NORMAL
FLYING
CUBONE
EP 1
GROUND
EP +1
FLYING
Move Fl
EP +2
Move Gd
Move E
Move Gd
Move E
Move Fl
+1
FLYING
GRASS
Move Gr
ELECTR
GRASS
FLYING
Bingo Coupons

Bingo	Coupons
10	200
9	50
8	50
7	40
6	30
5	20
4	10
3	10
2	10
1	0

The ELECTABUZZ fled!

The number of Poké Coupons you earn depends on how many lines you fill. If you don't think you'll be able to beat the entire board, concentrate on making as many lines as you can, as efficiently as you can.

BATTLE CDs AND BATTLE SIMS

Enemies will sometimes leave Battle CDs behind after you've defeated them in combat. Take the discs to Realgam Tower and play the Battle Sims stored on them. Beat the situational challenges to earn fabulous prizes. You won't begin to find Battle CDs until your journeys take you to Phenac City, however.

MACHAMP Lv 20
66 / 66
Turn 3

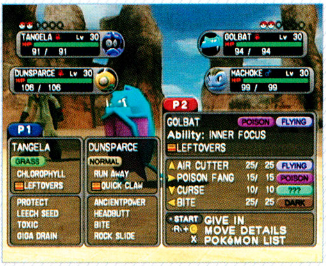
Some Battle Sims require you to perform moves on certain turns. For example, in Battle CD 07, wait until Aggron performs Dig and then use Earthquake on the third turn—your Machamp's attacks will be useless until then.

Four-Way Melee

Pokémon XD is the ideal place to battle with your friends. You can set a variety of rules, such as level and team-size limits, as well as set up Single or Double Battles. The number of ways to play is virtually limitless. And Pokémon XD's cast of characters and moves look better than those of any Pokémon game before it.

SALAMENCE Lv 57
184 / 184
SWAMPERT Lv 63
247 / 301
P1
FIGHT
POKéMON
START GIVE IN

In Versus mode, you can import your Story-mode team to compete against up to three GBA-connected opponents.


TANGELA Lv 30
91 / 91
GOLBAT Lv 30
94 / 94
DUNSPARCE Lv 30
106 / 106
MACHOKE Lv 30
99 / 99
P2
P1
GOLBAT
POISON
FLYING
Ability: INNER FOCUS
LEFTOVERS
TANGELA
GRASS
CHLOROPHYLL
LEFTOVERS
PROTECT
LEECH SEED
TOXIC
GIGA DRAIN
DUNSPARCE
NORMAL
RUN AWAY
QUICK CLAW
ANCIENTPOWER
HEADBUTT
BITE
ROCK SLIDE
AIR CUTTER 25/ 25 FLYING
POISON FANG 15/ 15 POISON
CURSE 10/ 10 ???
BITE 25/ 25 DARK
START GIVE IN
R+ MOVE DETAILS
X POKéMON LIST

Go head-to-head against an opponent in a Quick Battle. Your Pokémon team will be random, so you'll have to analyze your own lineup and your foe's quickly.

With Poké Ball in hand, nothing will stand in your way.

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Slifer the Sky Dragon
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Mild Fantasy Violence
NINTENDO DS™
KONAMI
www.konami.com/gs

Yugi

Do you duel? You do? That's perfect - we should duel!

Please Select Answer.

Yes

No

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BE LEGENDARY
BE B
Massive environment that includes Manhattan and Queens.
"A sight to behold."
- GameSpy.com
TEEN
T
Language
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org
PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE
PlayStation 2
XBOX
NINTENDO GAMECUBE.
NINTENDO DS.
GAME BOY ADVANCE
WIRELESS GAME
MARVEL

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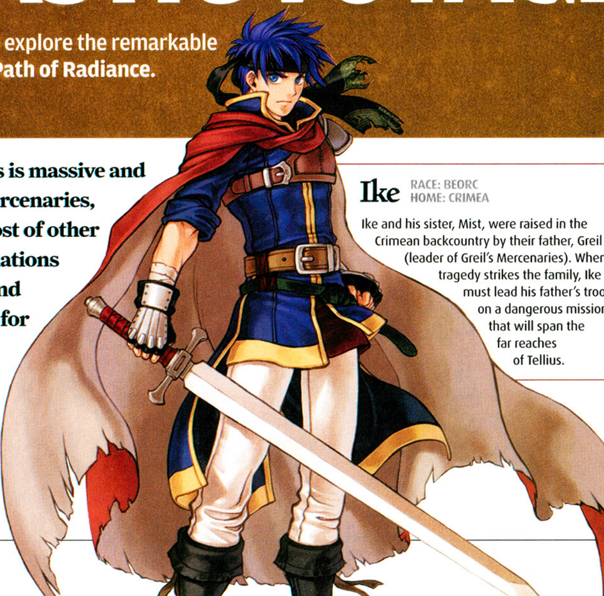
FANTASTIC VOYAGE

Step off the beaten path and explore the remarkable world within **Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance.**

By Andy Myers



The continent of Tellius is massive and filled with pirates, mercenaries, demihumans and a host of other dangers and wonders. Its nations are embroiled in a brutal and costly war. To prepare you for your long journey across the continent, we've put together a rundown of Tellius's key inhabitants and travel routes.

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Ike

RACE: BEORC
HOME: CRIMEA

Ike and his sister, Mist, were raised in the Crimean backcountry by their father, Greil (leader of Greil's Mercenaries). When tragedy strikes the family, Ike must lead his father's troops on a dangerous mission that will span the far reaches of Tellius.

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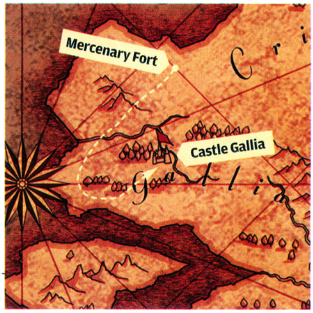
CRIMEAN COUNTRY

Crimea, an expansive nation on the continent of Tellius, is home to a number of cities inhabited by the Beorc (human) race. Although the majority of Crimeans are generally ignorant to the ways of the outside world, their leaders have worked tirelessly to create peace with neighboring nations, especially Gallia (home to the Laguz beast tribe). Before their peace efforts could come to fruition, however, the capital city of Crimea was brutally attacked by Daein, the country east of Crimea. King Ashnard of Daein laid waste to the Crimean capital, executing the royal family and enslaving the Crimean people. The only survivor among the royalty was Princess Elincia Ridell Crimea, the secret daughter of King Ramon. She is rumored to be on the run with Greil's Mercenaries, a band that's moving across the Crimean countryside toward Gallian territory. The journey is sure to be a long one, but it is of vital importance to the survival of the Crimean nation.

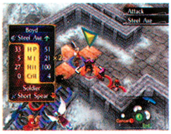
Travel Tip! Being outside the capital, the countryside of Crimea is removed from the turmoil of war. But keep an eye out for Daein troops patrolling the land—they will attack anyone not in allegiance with the Daein empire.



Boyd

RACE: BEORC
HOME: CRIMEA

Boyd, Ike's childhood friend, was recruited into Greil's Mercenaries to lend his axe-wielding skills to the group. Though Boyd's bark is often louder than his bite, he has the potential to be a great warrior someday, with the proper training. Boyd's brothers, Rolf and Oscar, also travel with the troop.



Mist

RACE: BEORC
HOME: CRIMEA

Though Mist's primary responsibility is to put food on the table for the mercenaries, she is also a healer-in-training. Mist wears a mysterious medallion that she received from her late mother. Little is known about the medallion except that it holds great power.

Greil

RACE: BEORC
HOME: CRIMEA

Greil is a powerful swordsman and fierce leader, earning him the undying respect of his mercenary band as well as his children, Ike and Mist. But Greil has a secret past that haunts him continuously. Even Greil's close friends and children know very little about him or his late wife.

Soren

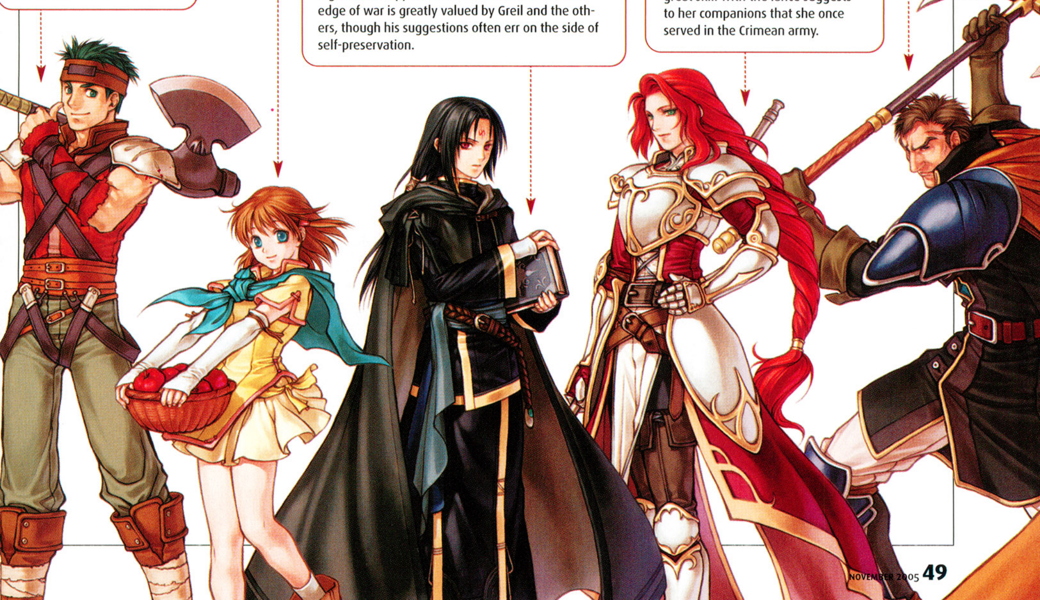
RACE: BEORC
HOME: CRIMEA

The mercenary operation would fall apart without the hard work of Soren the Mage. Soren not only harnesses the power of lightning on the battlefield, he also minds the books for the mercenaries, keeping track of supplies and statistics. Soren's knowledge of war is greatly valued by Greil and the others, though his suggestions often err on the side of self-preservation.

Titania

RACE: BEORC
HOME: CRIMEA

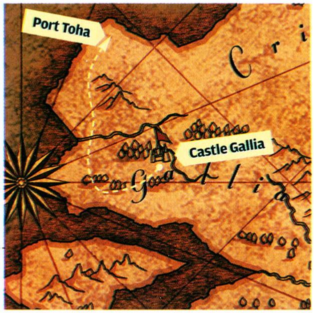
Greil's most trusted and loyal mercenary, Titania, has fought by his side for many years. She is also secretive about her past, though her great skill with the lance suggests to her companions that she once served in the Crimean army.



THE WILDS OF GALLIA

Gallia, Crimea's neighbor to the southwest, is a beautiful coastal country with lush forests and vast wilderness areas. But Gallia should not be entered lightly—its inhabitants are primarily of the Laguz beast tribe. The ways of the Laguz are foreign to the Beorc, who rarely set foot into Gallian territory. Laguz beasts are a self-sustaining bunch, needing only their animal instincts and sharp claws to survive. They have no use for conventional weapons, and can smell a Beorc's iron from miles away. When Greil's Mercenaries crossed the Crimean-Gallian border, word quickly reached the king of the beasts, Caineghis. But because of the king's ties with the royal family of Crimea, he granted Princess Elincia and the mercenaries permission to travel through the country unharmed.

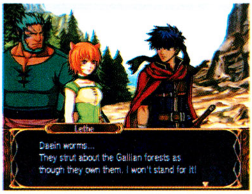
Travel Tip! Uttering the word "subhuman" in Gallia may result in immediate death due to its negative connotations. "Laguz" is the preferred term among the tribe.



Lethe

RACE: LAGUZ
HOME: GALLIA

Lethe, a beast warrior in service of King Caineghis, has a severe disdain for all Beorc. She joined Greil's Mercenaries only on direct order from the king, and though she despises the Beorc's very presence, her fighting skills serve as a great asset to them.

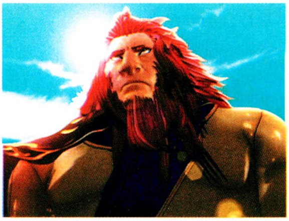


Lethe

Daein worms...
They strut about the Gallian forests as though they own them. I won't stand for it!

Caineghis

RACE: LAGUZ
HOME: GALLIA



King Caineghis of the beast tribe is a strong leader, and respected by the Laguz throughout Gallia. He has worked tirelessly to position Gallia as an ally with Crimea in an effort to increase tolerance between the two races. Caineghis is a friend to the Crimean royal family, as well as to Titania and Commander Greil, who once lived in Gallia among the beasts.

Mordecai

RACE: LAGUZ
HOME: GALLIA

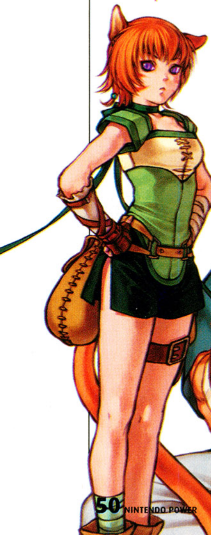
You wouldn't know it by his might on the battlefield, but Mordecai is as gentle a beast as they come. He does not understand the language of the Beorc as well as other Laguz do, but his good nature makes him a likeable travel companion regardless.

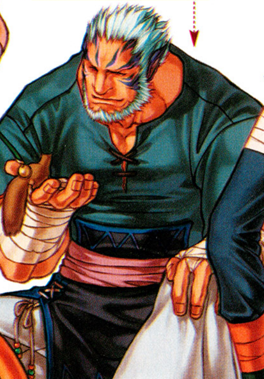
58
13
Breath
Claw

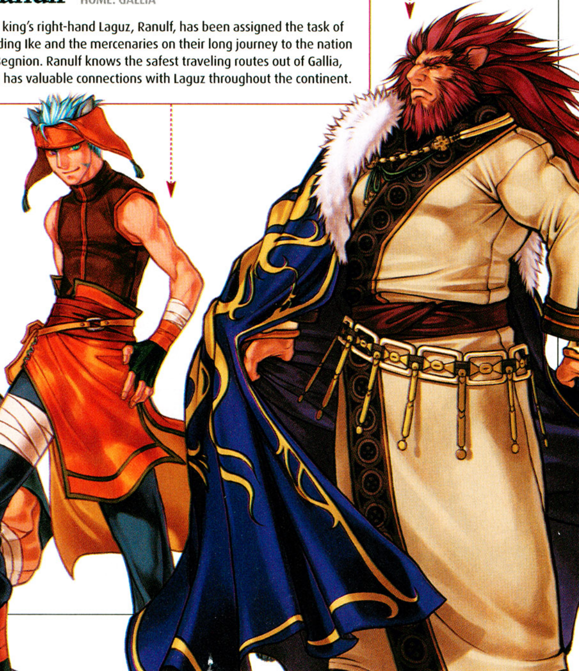
Ranulf

RACE: LAGUZ
HOME: GALLIA

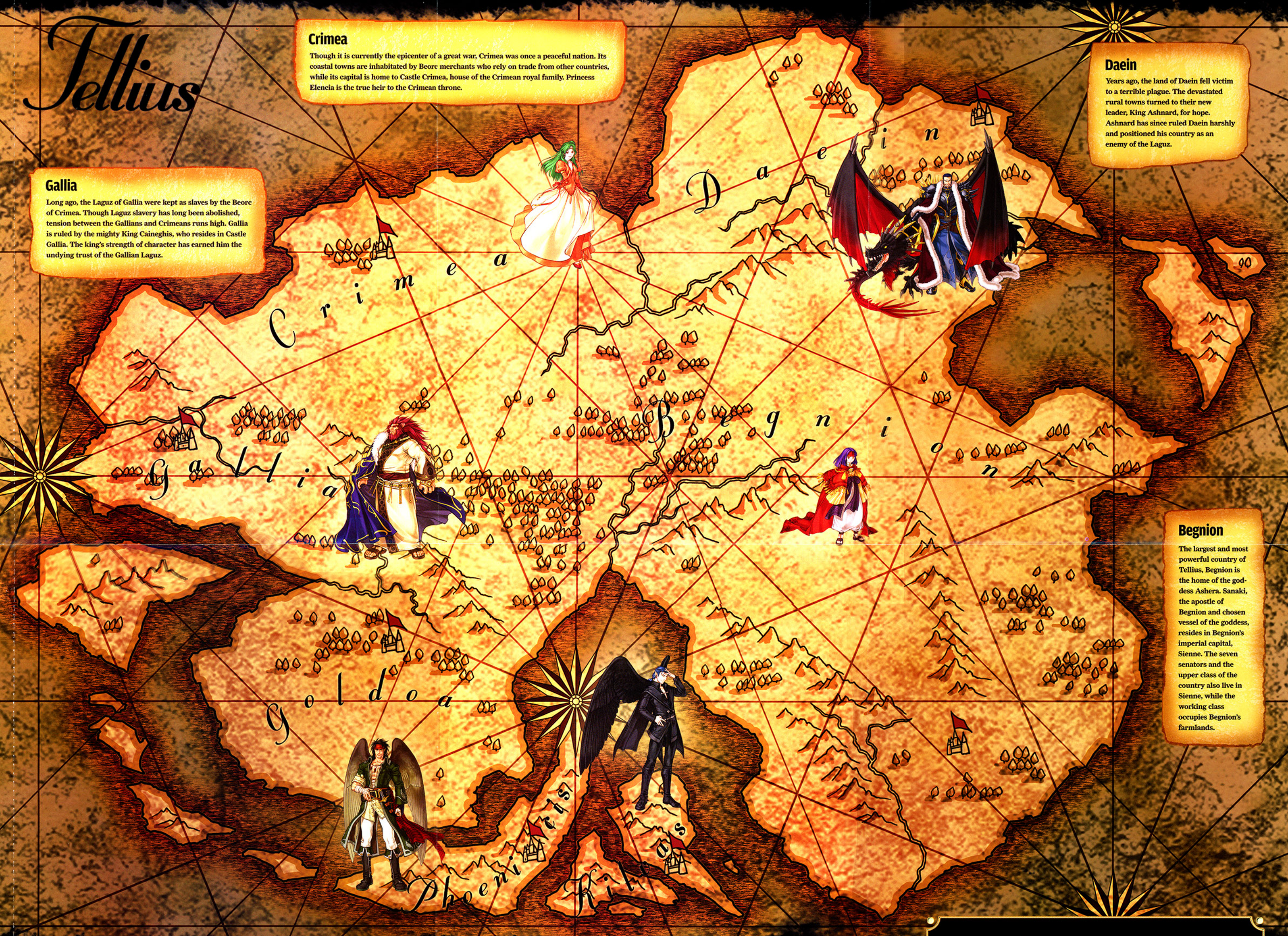
The king's right-hand Laguz, Ranulf, has been assigned the task of guiding Ike and the mercenaries on their long journey to the nation of Begnion. Ranulf knows the safest traveling routes out of Gallia, and has valuable connections with Laguz throughout the continent.







Tellius



Crimea

Though it is currently the epicenter of a great war, Crimea was once a peaceful nation. Its coastal towns are inhabited by Beorc merchants who rely on trade from other countries, while its capital is home to Castle Crimea, house of the Crimean royal family. Princess Elencia is the true heir to the Crimean throne.

Gallia

Long ago, the Laguz of Gallia were kept as slaves by the Beorc of Crimea. Though Laguz slavery has long been abolished, tension between the Gallians and Crimeans runs high. Gallia is ruled by the mighty King Caineghis, who resides in Castle Gallia. The king's strength of character has earned him the undying trust of the Gallian Laguz.

Daein

Years ago, the land of Daein fell victim to a terrible plague. The devastated rural towns turned to their new leader, King Ashnard, for hope. Ashnard has since ruled Daein harshly and positioned his country as an enemy of the Laguz.

Begnion

The largest and most powerful country of Tellius, Begnion is the home of the goddess Ashera. Sanaki, the apostle of Begnion and chosen vessel of the goddess, resides in Begnion's imperial capital, Sienne. The seven senators and the upper class of the country also live in Sienne, while the working class occupies Begnion's farmlands.

Goldoa

Little is known about the nation of Goldoa because of its secluded situation amid mountain ranges. Goldoa is home to the Laguz dragons, and is ruled by the Black Dragon King Deghinsea and his son, Prince Kurthnaga. Dragon-human interaction is rare on Tellius, though the king desires peace between the Laguz and the Beorc.

Phoenicis & Kilvas

Phoenicis and Kilvas, the two islands near the southern coast of Tellius, create a channel that is traveled by daring ship merchants. The islands themselves are inhabited by the Laguz hawk tribe of Phoenicis and the crow tribe of Kilvas. Although the tribes often disagree, they see eye-to-eye on one thing: their dislike of the Beorc. Both the Phoenicis and Kilvas tribes practice piracy, attacking merchant ships and stealing the loot.

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Fantasy Violence

NINTENDO POWER

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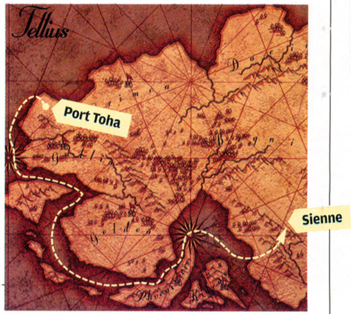
FIRE EMBLEM
PATH OF RADIANCE

BEGNION BY SEA

Traveling across Tellius by land is made difficult by monstrous mountain ranges. To reach the nations of Begnion and Goldoa, one must travel the seas through the contintent's southwest channel. This is no easy route, as members of the Laguz bird tribes scour the ocean channel for merchant ships. The Laguz hawks from the island of Phoenicis, led by the mighty King Tibarn, prey on Begnion vessels because of their hatred for the nation. The crows of Kilvas, however, are relentless pirates who will loot any ship that catches their eye. Seeing a flock of Laguz circling a ship is a bad omen for any captain, though some will risk everything to make a living on these dangerous waters. Nasir, a ship captain from Toha, Crimea, has made the Crimea-Begnion trip many times, and is currently escorting the wanted mercenaries to the nation of Begnion. There, Princess Elincia hopes to obtain an audience with the apostle Sanaki, leader of the Begnion people, and convince her to join Crimea's side in the war against Daein.



Travel Tip! When passing the Goldoa shoreline, keep an eye out for Laguz of the dragon tribe. These beautiful creatures are rarely seen by Beorc eyes.

Naesala

RACE: LAGUZ
HOME: KILVAS

Though he has ties with the other bird tribes, Naesala is not to be trusted. He leads the Laguz crows of Kilvas, who are known to be pirates of the skies. Naesala has no qualms about stealing from anyone, and would betray even his own kind for the right price.

Reyson

RACE: LAGUZ
HOME: SERENES FOREST

Prince Reyson is one of the only known survivors of the Laguz heron tribe. Over 20 years ago, the herons lived peaceful lives in Serenes Forest (in the northwest corner of Begnion). Then a Begnion mob who falsely believed the herons were responsible for the assassination of their former apostle burned the forest to the ground, taking almost the entire heron tribe with it. Reyson hates the Beorc, and lives in isolation under the care of Tibarn and the hawks of Phoenicis.

Thank you. I swear on the honor of my clan to do all I can to strengthen your cause.

Sanaki

RACE: BEORC
HOME: BEGNION

Sanaki is from a long line of apostles, leaders of the nation of Begnion and the chosen voice of the goddess, Athena. Like her mother and grandmother before her, Sanaki desires peace with the Laguz, and will work within the bloated political system of Begnion's capital city to achieve it.

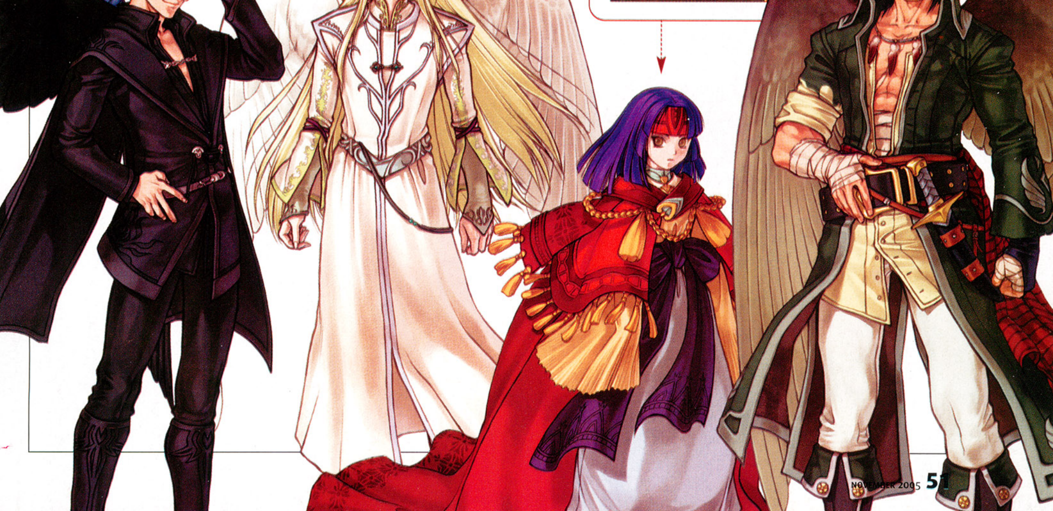
Sanaki

But you... You're a commoner. You have no surname, no documented lineage... You have nothing.

Tibarn

RACE: LAGUZ
HOME: PHOENICIS

King of the Laguz hawks of Phoenicis, Tibarn and his loyal birds patrol the skies, occasionally picking off Begnion merchant ships for loot. After the heron massacre at Serenes Forest, Tibarn vowed to protect the surviving Prince Reyson, whom he keeps by his side to this day.



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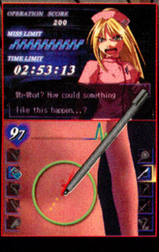
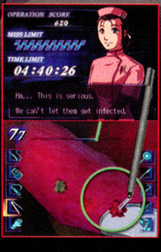

OPERATION SCORE
200
MISS LIMIT
TIME LIMIT
02:53:13
97

Wh-What? How could something like this happen...?

Scalpel

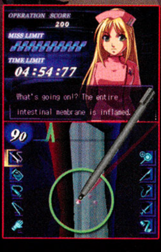
This razor sharp instrument is the doctor's main weapon. Use it to make incisions or remove tumors and other objects that don't belong in the human body.


OPERATION SCORE
620
MISS LIMIT
TIME LIMIT
04:40:26
77

Hm... This is serious. We can't let them get infected.

Forceps

With a steady hand and a keen eye you can extract harmful materials from your patients and pick up delicate objects like synthetic membranes.


OPERATION SCORE
200
MISS LIMIT
TIME LIMIT
04:54:77
90

What's going on!? The entire intestinal membrane is inflamed.

Laser

The pinnacle of technology in modern medicine. The laser can eradicate even the most malignant of tumors. Be careful when wielding it, as powerful as it is, you might cause more harm than good with one missed stroke.

INSIDE ZELDA

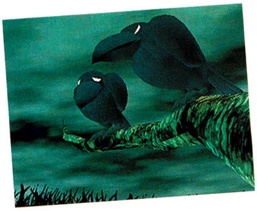
NINTENDO POWER'S MONTHLY CHECK-IN FROM THE ZELDA DEVELOPMENT TEAM.

(Part 6)

A LINK UNLIKE ANY OTHER

KEISUKE NISHIMORI | NINTENDO | KYOTO

What would it be like to *really* be Link? Maybe you know a little something about that if you've saved Hyrule a few times in your day. But designer Keisuke Nishimori is currently living and breathing Link 24/7: he's responsible for bringing Link and other player-controlled characters to life in Twilight Princess. It's a more complex undertaking than ever before, since you won't only control Link to make your way through the hero's darkest adventure; you'll also rove the Twilight Realm as the wolf, with the mysterious creature Midna riding on his back, plus travel across Hyrule on horseback. Nishimori plans to make you the hero in ways no one has ever imagined—and he's got more than a few insights into your next Zelda quest.



Nishimori's ravens cast their menacing presence over the opening of Luigi's Mansion, the designer's first creations for Nintendo.

A Life of Pure Imagination

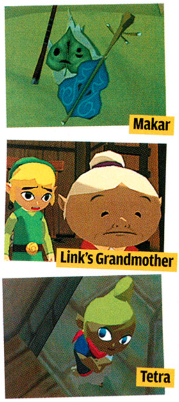
I'm one of the newer members of Nintendo on the Twilight Princess creative crew, having come to our company during the early days of the Nintendo GameCube. In fact, my first assignment was to help create the demo movie for Luigi's Mansion. Remember the sinister crows hanging out in the trees? Those were mine. Though I had studied three-dimensional CG animation at my art university and absorbed everything I could about how to make 3-D movies, creating data for a game was completely different! Honestly, I'm not sure that my university study gave me such a big advantage when I first joined Nintendo. My overall creative passion has given me much more of a leg up. Ever since I was very young, during the NES era, I loved to draw pictures. My parents were very strict about how much time I could play video games, so if I wasn't getting in gameplay at a friend's house, I was probably spending time drawing. I didn't own my first console until my university days, when I bought myself a Nintendo 64 and lost myself in the worlds of Ocarina of Time and Super Mario 64.

At the time I studied 3-D animation, I really had to wonder where I might find my dream job, one where I could really express my imagination. In Japan, there was a long-running children's television show called *Ponkikki* that featured utterly outlandish, high-quality short films. I had a strong interest in that kind of work—really free, really over the top. Around the same time, the *Toy Story* movie came out and blew me away with its innovative use of 3-D animation—and then I dreamed of working for Pixar! So when I graduated from school, I visited many creative studios, both in moviemaking and game development, and ultimately decided to focus on trying to find a job with Nintendo. Specifically, I wanted a position creating 3-D character animations. Lo and behold, I got exactly the job I wanted! I still think of the similarities between *Ponkikki* and Nintendo—both encourage artists to explore creative expression, and Nintendo's development philosophy, which encourages us to imagine worlds that will appeal to a wide range of ages, inspires a high degree of imagination. You never know where your passions will carry you in life—mine took me to a dream job at Nintendo.

Sunshine versus Shadow

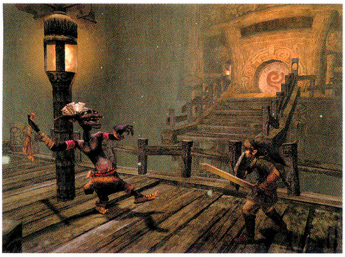
After my work on Luigi's Mansion, I was in charge of the modeling and animation of non-player characters in The Wind Waker, such as the forest creature Makar, Link's grandmother and pre-Zelda Tetra, plus more NPCs in Mario Kart: Double Dash!! I also helped design some of the standard Mario series character models that have guided designs on Nintendo's Mario collaborations with other developers. It's really interesting to see such characters go and be designed into other games, doing a variety of things outside of Nintendo. Ah, and here's one more of my characters that you might remember: Bowser Jr. in Super Mario Sunshine!

Back in my N64 days, when



Some of Wind Waker's most vivid non-player characters were given life by the imaginative Nishimori.

I've come to a deeper understanding that the Zelda series offers a home for malevolence and darkness . . .



Link will surely need to take a mature approach to combating evil—new monsters will surface in Twilight Princess.

I played Ocarina of Time, I was strongly drawn to the dynamic of player freedom. In the Zelda series, as you know, players occasionally move forward through gameplay by solving puzzles or figuring out a mystery. What I really admired was how—when I got stuck in Ocarina—the game provided me a realm of things to do where I could enjoy totally unrelated pursuits, or just simply walk around, and then the solution to my earlier problem would pop into my mind. And then I could go back to the main gameplay. Ocarina had a big field where the player could explore at will while letting any linear-gameplay solutions emerge naturally. That helps the player feel like he really exists in the game—and on that field—and that experience has become core to my own philosophy about game development. The player's freedom is essential!

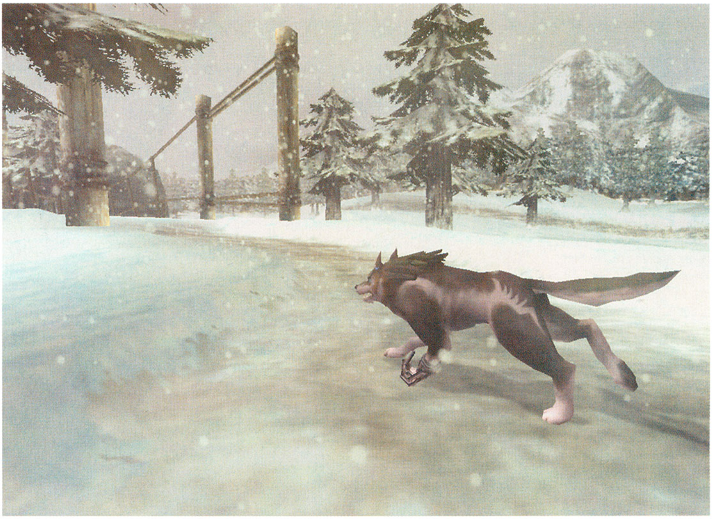
Artistically speaking, I like a visual style that's simultaneously cute and dark. I'm a huge fan of *Tim Burton's The Nightmare before Christmas*, for instance. It's kind of cute on the surface, but it also has a depth of darkness. But it's also highly entertaining for a wide range of people. I have a strong interest in that sort of thing. It's why I've been particularly drawn to the Zelda universe. Before I started working for Nintendo, I was very interested in the Mario world; but after working extensively on both series, I've come to a deeper understanding that the Zelda series offers a home for malevolence and darkness among its characters and stories.

Running with the Wolf

For Twilight Princess, I've been placed in charge of the modeling and animation of player-controlled characters: Link, the wolf (and Midna on his back) and Link's horse. It's the first time that I'm supervising other people's work, rather than just focusing on my assignment, and I'm working with Satoru Takizawa, the art director, and Yusuke Nakano, the overall character designer, to move all of their projects forward. Since these characters are the heroic figures of the game, I want the players to feel like they themselves are really cool while they're playing and feeling that connection. But Twilight Princess will also have something else special—by coincidence, the team has more women creators than usual, which is lending a poetic softness to the experience.

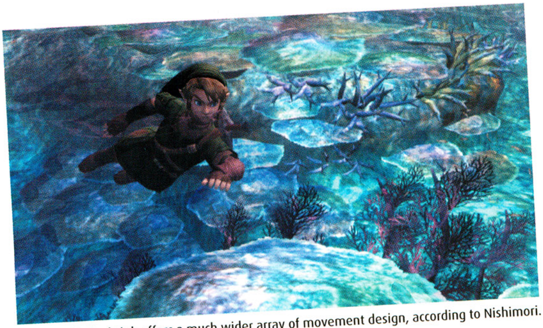
When I first heard about the wolf idea, it was quite a huge shock. While the Zelda games have had unique player characters, like Goron Link, who've looked and acted less like a human, they've always been at least somewhat humanoid in form. Designing the wolf has invited many new challenges—frightening but stimulating challenges! If you've seen the E3 Twilight Princess trailer, you've had your first introduction to Midna, who's not only a key character, but also performs an essential role in relation to the wolf. Exactly what? Well, I've got to keep many wolf details secret for now, but let me discuss a few philosophical points, and you can start imagining what we've got in store for you.

The wolf's control perspective, for instance, strongly shapes our direction. In a typical 3-D Zelda game, the third-person perspective has the player watching the back of the character as he controls it. But Mr. Miyamoto has helped us to fully think through what this would mean for wolf control: if we used the same tack, the player would constantly look at the wolf's tail. Boring. And it'd be hard for the player to know which direction the wolf was running, with so much wolf tail and its rear haunches blocking the view! So . . . having Midna riding on the wolf's back helps us solve some of



Twilight Princess's wolf will bring new styles of control never before seen in the Zelda series—with or without the mysterious hitchhiker Midna giving assistance from the wolf's back.

> **If we're imagining Link in 3-D, our thoughts can wander . . . back to Ocarina of Time, where we can ask this question: What could a realistic Link *not* do on the Nintendo 64?**



A longer-limbed Link offers a much wider array of movement design, according to Nishimori.

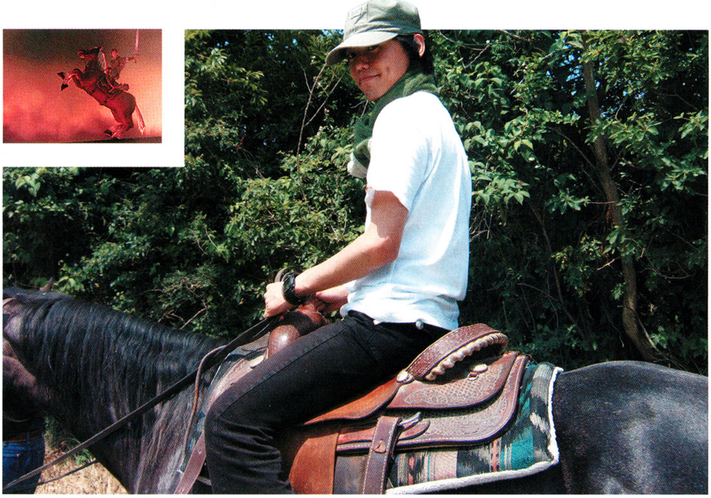
those problems.

Another thing, because we've never had a player directly *extensively* control a character with four legs before, it's hard to find precedents to know whether our solutions are authentically Zelda in spirit. Not to mention, how can I use a wolf to do Zelda-like things? A wolf can't push a block! A wolf can't climb ladders! On the other hand (and here's where things get interesting), a wolf can do some things that *only* a wolf can do, and we've never had this dynamic in a Zelda game before. While a wolf can't use items—another Zelda hallmark—it does have the power of a wild creature. That is, a creature of the wilderness. I promise you that it'll be a unique experience. When I'm giving guidance to my team, keeping the wolf's wildness in mind lends a certain wildness to our thinking. Someone suggests, well, how about this? And I say, well, how about *this*! And new ideas are born. Or I'll make a test program while working with programmers, just to see how new ways of programming might shape the wolf, and then present those new ideas to the team. There's a lot of trial and error. The real challenge is to make Link control and wolf control seem very connected, yet still preserve the totally wild spirit of the wolf. It's exciting work—and I'm sorry that I have to be so vague about it!

Keeping Stride with Link

When Ocarina of Time was made, the development team went to study the motions and behavior of a real horse. I thought that it would be crucial to do the same thing for Twilight Princess. Mr. Miyamoto paved the way for me to visit an equestrian club, not the formal British-style equestrian clubs, but an American-style center—a much better fit for the spirit of Twilight Princess, because Link is much more like a cowboy in this game. What a difference working with live animals makes over simply viewing pictures or videos. You just don't get the sense of how powerful and immense a real horse is until you're dwarfed by one! That experience really strengthened my belief that you can heighten the realism of a game by exaggerating the size and action of things. So far, I've been able to research wolves only on DVDs. I'd like to come face-to-face with a real one, if possible. Though I could certainly see a wolf at a zoo, no doubt encountering a wild wolf would be a far different experience. I can hope!

The Wind Waker is the only Zelda title that I've worked on before. Obviously, it's leagues away from the style of Twilight Princess. In Wind Waker, Link could do moves that were superdeformed, sometimes even cute. Twilight's Link must conform to a more realistic world. But that doesn't mean that I won't have him make exaggerated moves—I want to take full advantage of the fact that we now have the adult Link's longer arms and legs when composing his actions. I've fully researched the Links of all the previous games to prepare for this game; of course, if we're imagining Link in 3-D, our thoughts can wander to Wind Waker and back to Ocarina of Time, where we can ask this question: What could a realistic Link *not* do on the Nintendo 64 that we could do with the Nintendo GameCube? It's led us to many fascinating ideas. You've already seen a few of our efforts to take horseback riding to a much higher level, and we're hard at work doing the same with combat. We've used motion-capture technology with professional swordfighters to get the dynamics down perfectly, and then we've used the data to bring combat to life on the GCN. We're also thinking about



The designer saddled up for some equestrian action to get a truer sense of how "cowboy Link" should ride his horse.

using motion capture with real dogs and a horse—animals are such an essential part of the game.

What Free Time?!?

My whole world is Twilight Princess right now, so there's not much time to indulge my other interests! But when I have the time, I try to soak in everything I can from movie directors who use powerful imagery. I'm a huge fan of Spike Jonze—his music videos and his films, like *Adaptation* and *Being John Malkovich*, are really groundbreaking. And Takei Goodman is my latest obsession—he's doing some very electrifying work directing Japanese music videos. Musically, I'm all about hip-hop, and Beastie Boys and the Japanese group Suchadarapa really make me relax. Back when I was in school, I played a lot of basketball and practiced kendo. Actually, when we were working on the sword-fighting motion capture, I wore the motion-capture suit and unleashed some of my kendo moves! Hopefully, my own moves will be in the final version of Twilight Princess. Though I've also become interested in snowboarding, don't think that I have a secret plan to have Link use some kind of snowboarding moves in the game!

Though I like to play games at home that I've been involved with (it's amazing to see your work come to life in the final version), since I've only worked on Nintendo GameCube games, I try to play as many Game Boy and Nintendo DS titles as I can. In Japan, there's a trend right now where people who *never* play games are picking up DS titles like Electroplankton and DS Brain Training. I really want to understand that phenomenon, what it is about those titles that pull those new people in so deeply. For instance, my parents are playing DS Brain Training—when I try to say something to them while they're playing the game, they'll interrupt me and tell me to wait until they're done playing! And then they'll remind me that when I was a kid, whenever they caught me playing a Famicom, that I never wanted to be interrupted either!

But back to my current passion. I'm really almost entirely focused on Twilight Princess right now. My ambition is to create the coolest Link that's ever existed. Not to say that he'll be totally different from other Links, since the longtime Zelda fans need to be completely satisfied with where we go with him. To be truly honest, I wish that I could play Twilight Princess like any other game fan, somehow forgetting all the secrets and surprises that I know about, so that I could be just as surprised and stunned by the experience that we're creating. At least if I can't, you can—it's going to be historic.

Photo courtesy of David Waterworth

Swords, yes. Snowboarding, no. Not all of Nishimori's hobbies will get in the game.

My ambition is to create the coolest Link that's ever existed.

NP TOP 200

THE COUNTDOWN CONTINUES

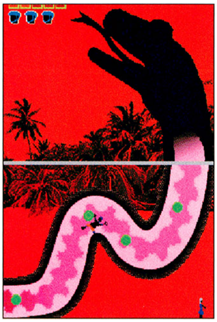
Consider this our official Revolution wishlist—and we're only getting started.

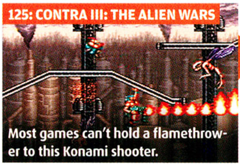
By Pete Michaud

Game Name	System	Release Date
160 Wizards & Warriors	NES	1987
159 Baten Kaitos: Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean	GCN	2004
158 Beetle Adventure Racing	N64	1999
157 Final Fight	SNES	1991
156 Tactics Ogre: The Knights of Lodis	GBA	2002
155 Duck Hunt	NES	1985
154 Pokémon Snap	N64	1999
153 Pilotwings	SNES	1991
152 Phantasy Star Online: Episode I & II	GCN	2002
151 Killer Instinct	SNES	1995
150 ActRaiser	SNES	1991
149 Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	GCN	2002
148 Donkey Kong	NES	1986
147 River City Ransom	NES	1990
146 Boktai: The Sun Is in Your Hand	GBA	2003
145 Baseball Stars	NES	1989
144 Super Ghouls 'N Ghosts	SNES	1991
143 Rygar	NES	1987
142 Ice Hockey	NES	1988
141 R.C. Pro-Am	NES	1988

132:
FEEL THE MAGIC: XY/XX

Nintendo gave Sega access to a dual-screened handheld device with a touch screen and a microphone, and what did they make? The weirdest game ever.



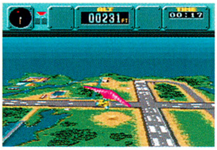


125: CONTRA III: THE ALIEN WARS

Most games can't hold a flamethrower to this Konami shooter.

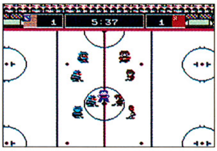
153:
PILOTWINGS

It might have looked like a Mode-7 tech demo, but it was actually the sleeper hit of the SNES launch. This gem was as 3-D as you could get in the 16-bit era.



142:
ICE HOCKEY

This classic NES title let gamers face-off at center ice. Back in the day, my team of four fatties was unstoppable.



Game Name	System	Release Date
140 Dragon Warrior	NES	1989
139 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	N64	2000
138 Super Bomberman	SNES	1993
137 Pinball of the Dead	GBA	2002
136 Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town	GBA	2003
135 NHL Hitz 20-03	GCN	2002
134 Dr. Mario	NES	1990
133 Double Dragon	NES	1988
132 Feel the Magic: XY/XX	DS	2004
131 Gradius	NES	1986
130 Skate or Die	NES	1988
129 Ghosts 'N Goblins	NES	1986
128 Astro Boy: Omega Factor	GBA	2004
127 Wave Race 64: Kawasaki Jet Ski	N64	1996
126 Mario Golf	N64	1999
125 Contra III: The Alien Wars	SNES	1992
124 NBA Street	GCN	2002
123 Burnout	GCN	2002
122 Viewtiful Joe 2	GCN	2004
121 Pokémon Colosseum	GCN	2004

5 Best Peripherals

5. DK Bongos - GCN
We've played DK's bongos—now we can only hope one day to strum on K.K. Slider's guitar.

4. Game Boy Player - GCN
Most people like that they can play GBA games on TV; I like that it gives my GCN a one-inch lift.

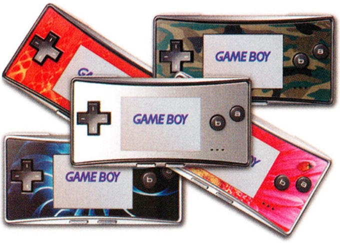
3. Game Boy Camera - Game Boy
Perhaps the most versatile Game Boy device ever released. Now, how's about a sequel?

2. R.O.B. - NES
The Robotic Operating Buddy wasn't as useful as he was fun to look at, but we still loved him.

1. WaveBird - GCN
On the California roadways, "Wave bird" means something *completely* different.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE
WAVEBIRD

pocket friendly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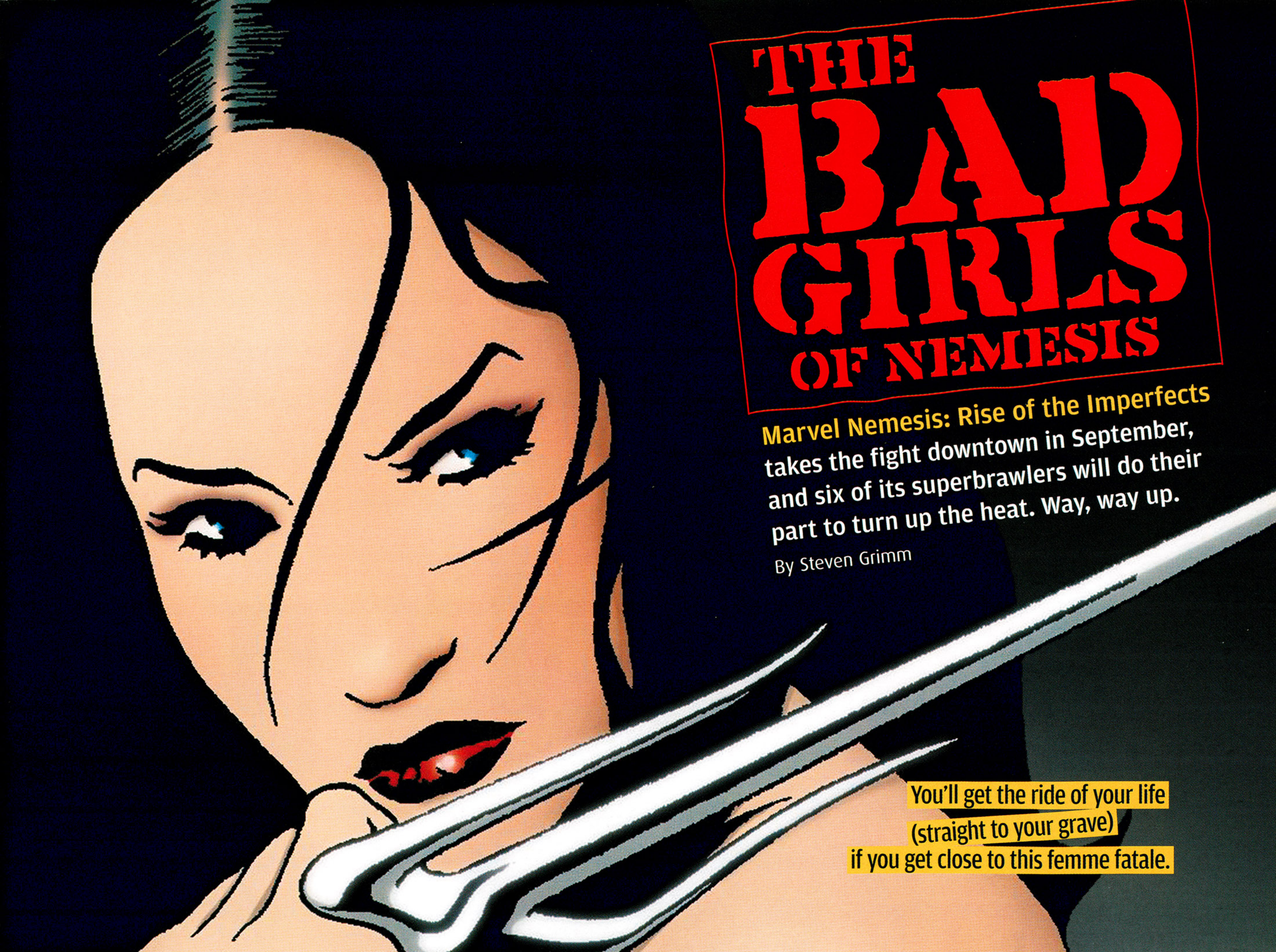
THE BAD GIRLS OF NEMESIS

Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects takes the fight downtown in September, and six of its superbrawlers will do their part to turn up the heat. Way, way up.

By Steven Grimm



You'll get the ride of your life
(straight to your grave)
if you get close to this femme fatale.

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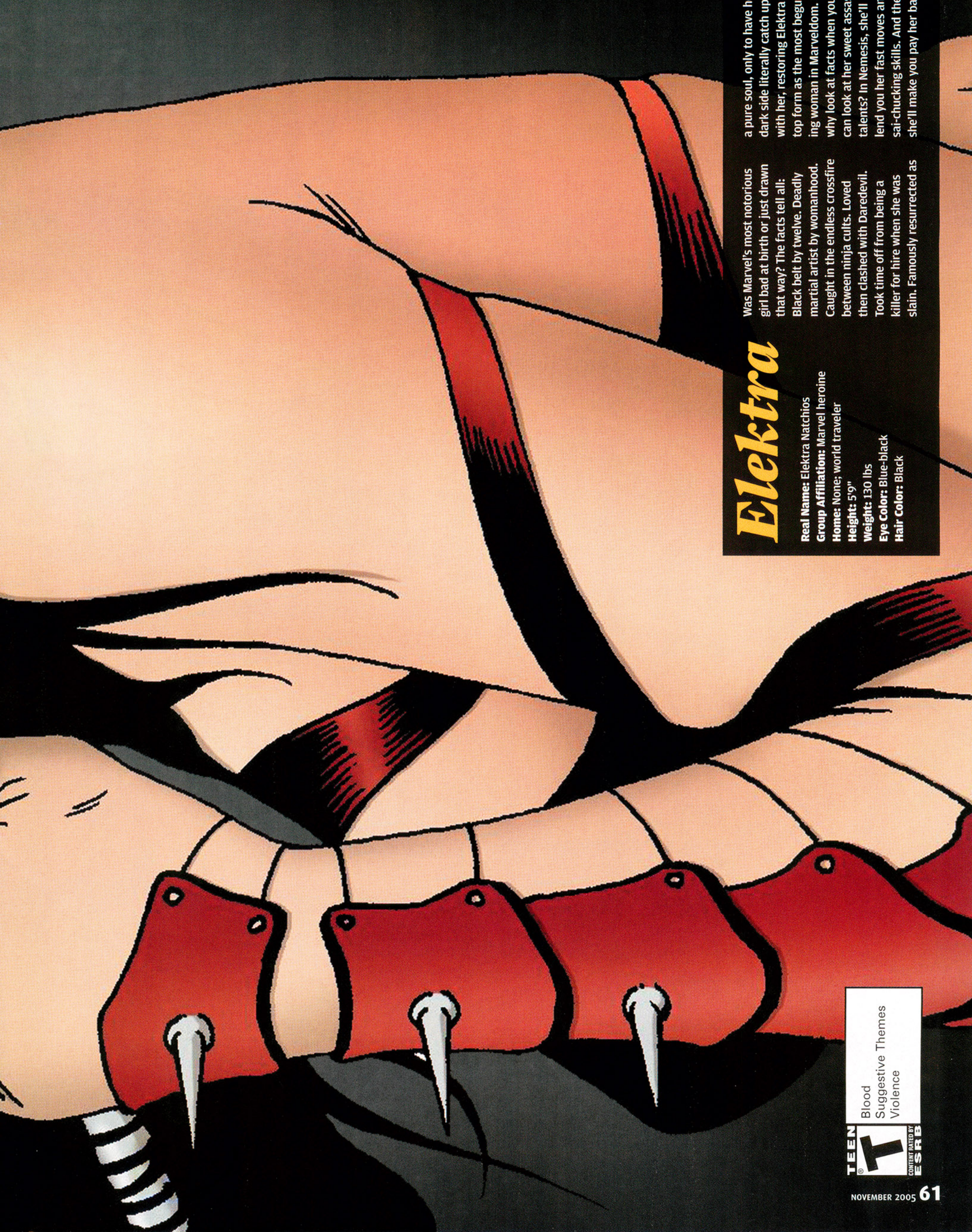

Elektra

Real Name: Elektra Natchios
Group Affiliation: Marvel heroine
Home: None; world traveler
Height: 5'9"
Weight: 130 lbs
Eye Color: Blue-black
Hair Color: Black

Was Marvel's most notorious girl bad at birth or just drawn that way? The facts tell all: Black belt by twelve. Deadly martial artist by womanhood. Caught in the endless crossfire between ninja cults. Loved then clashed with Daredevil. Took time off from being a killer for hire when she was slain. Famously resurrected as a pure soul, only to have her dark side literally catch up with her, restoring Elektra to top form as the most beguiling woman in Marveldom. But why look at facts when you can look at her sweet assassin talents? In Nemesis, she'll lend you her fast moves and sai-chucking skills. And then she'll make you pay her back.

TEEN
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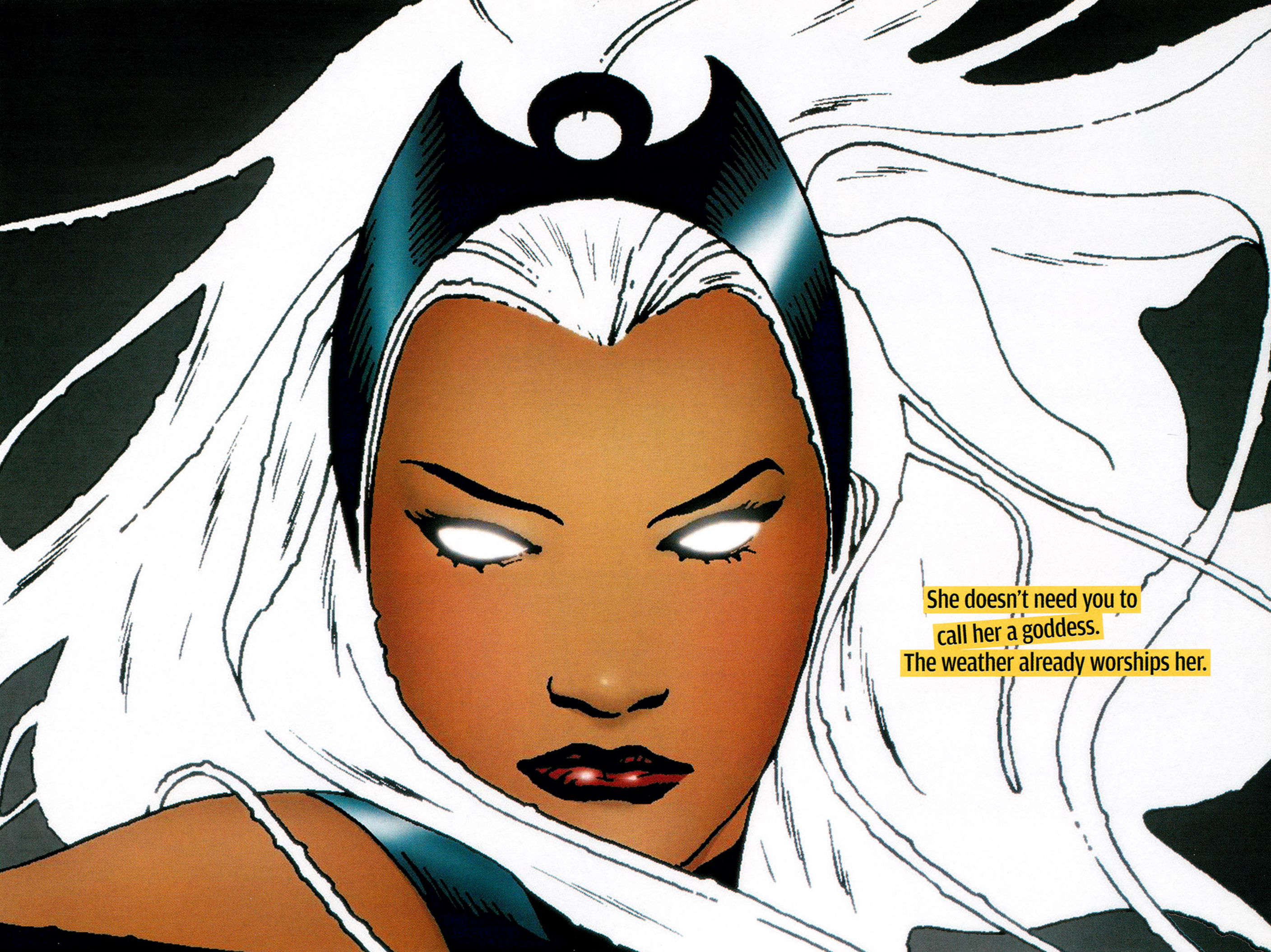
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood
Suggestive Themes
Violence

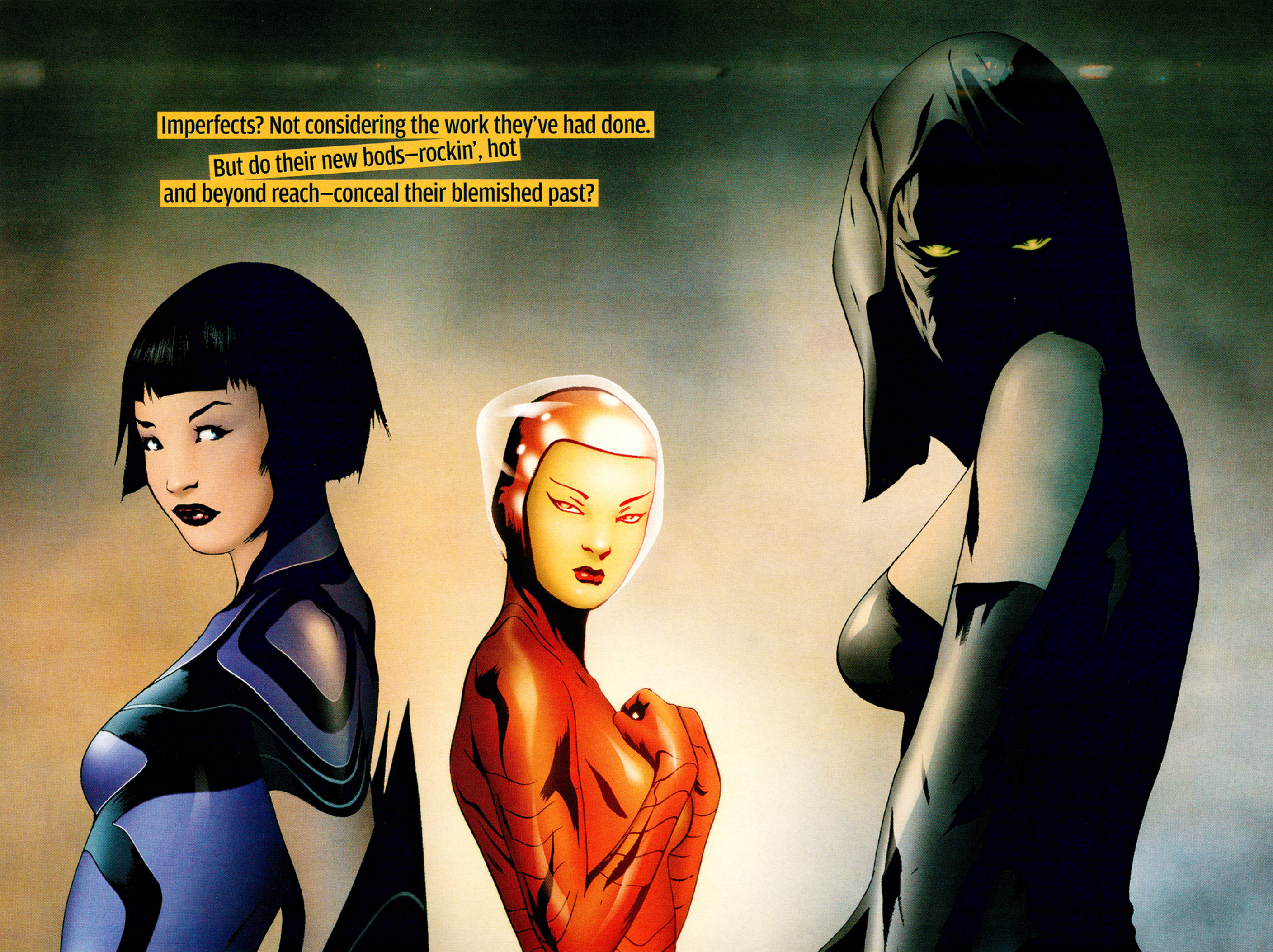


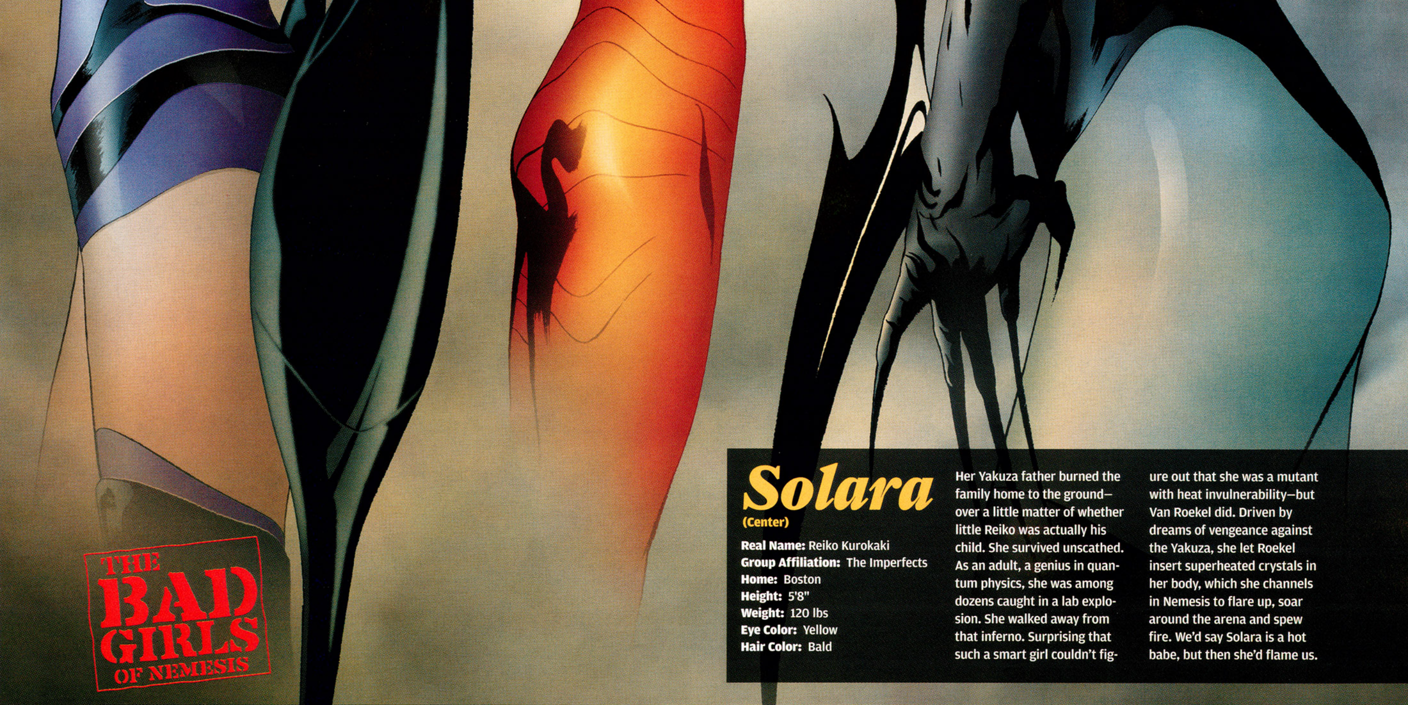
She doesn’t need you to
call her a goddess.
The weather already worships her.

Storm

Real Name: Ororo Munroe
Group Affiliation: X-Men
Home: None; world traveler
Height: 5'11"
Weight: 127 lbs
Eye Color: Blue
Hair Color: White

Noble, dignified, articulate—the X-Men veteran is the very portrait of gentility, upholding the sanctity of all life. Yet this serene lady, who's more than cozy with the forces of nature, hides a wild side. At times in her life, she's gone mohawk (not fauxhawk!) and slummed with sewer rebels, freaked out and hit the Eastern seaboard with a hurricane, and thrown a hissy fit over getting better roles in the X-Men movies. (Sorry, that was Halle Berry.) In Nemesis, Storm will check some powers at the door and focus on dirty tricks: the wind witch can lord her authority from above, swoop down like a missile and smite foes with lightning. Consider us smitten.


Imperfects? Not considering the work they've had done.
But do their new bods—rockin', hot
and beyond reach—conceal their blemished past?



THE BAD GIRLS OF NEMESIS

Fault Zone

(Left)

Real Name: Maria Peterov
Group Affiliation: The Imperfects
Home: Moscow
Height: 5'9"
Weight: 95 lbs
Eye Color: Grey
Hair Color: Black

You really can't find fault with the Russian girl once known as Maria—not after you learn that an earthquake crushed her parents, wrecked her limbs and (since she was a teen ballet queen at the time) mangled her dreams. So when the scientist Niles Van Roekel approached her, seeking test subjects for his perfect-making technology, she jumped at the chance to have cybernetics replace her arms and legs. But a seismic accelerator tied to her nervous system? It lets her generate localized earthquakes, making Fault Zone a seriously sick puppy, given how the Richter scale destroyed her former life. In the Nemesis battle arenas, Fault Zone will pirouette and plié (kick it ballet-style, that is) to get her way, plus stab the earth with her freaky prosthetics to catch foes in her ground-zero embrace.

Solara

(Center)

Real Name: Reiko Kurokaki
Group Affiliation: The Imperfects
Home: Boston
Height: 5'8"
Weight: 120 lbs
Eye Color: Yellow
Hair Color: Bald

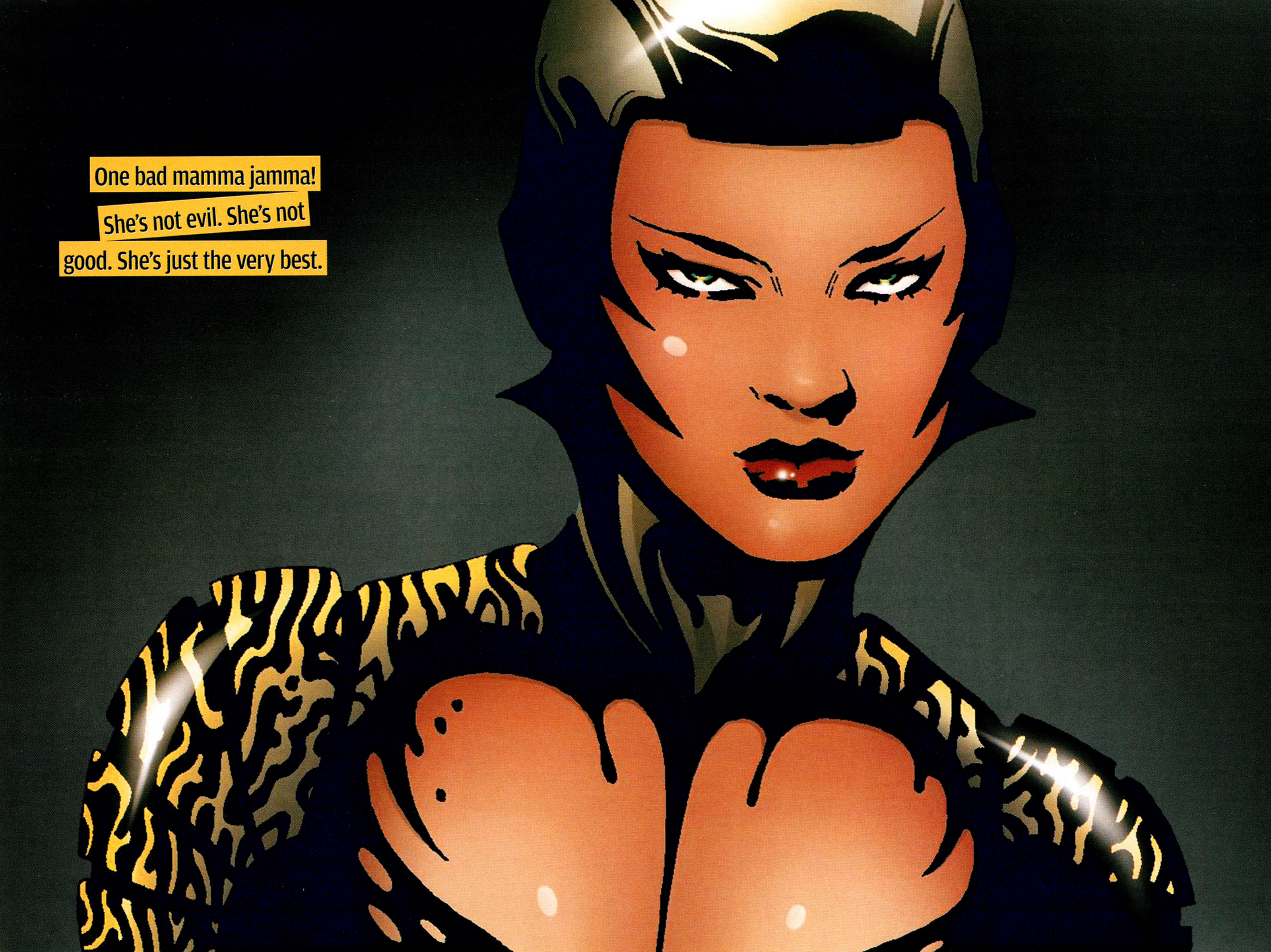
Her Yakuza father burned the family home to the ground—over a little matter of whether little Reiko was actually his child. She survived unscathed. As an adult, a genius in quantum physics, she was among dozens caught in a lab explosion. She walked away from that inferno. Surprising that such a smart girl couldn't figure out that she was a mutant with heat invulnerability—but Van Roekel did. Driven by dreams of vengeance against the Yakuza, she let Roekel insert superheated crystals in her body, which she channels in Nemesis to flare up, soar around the arena and spew fire. We'd say Solara is a hot babe, but then she'd flame us.

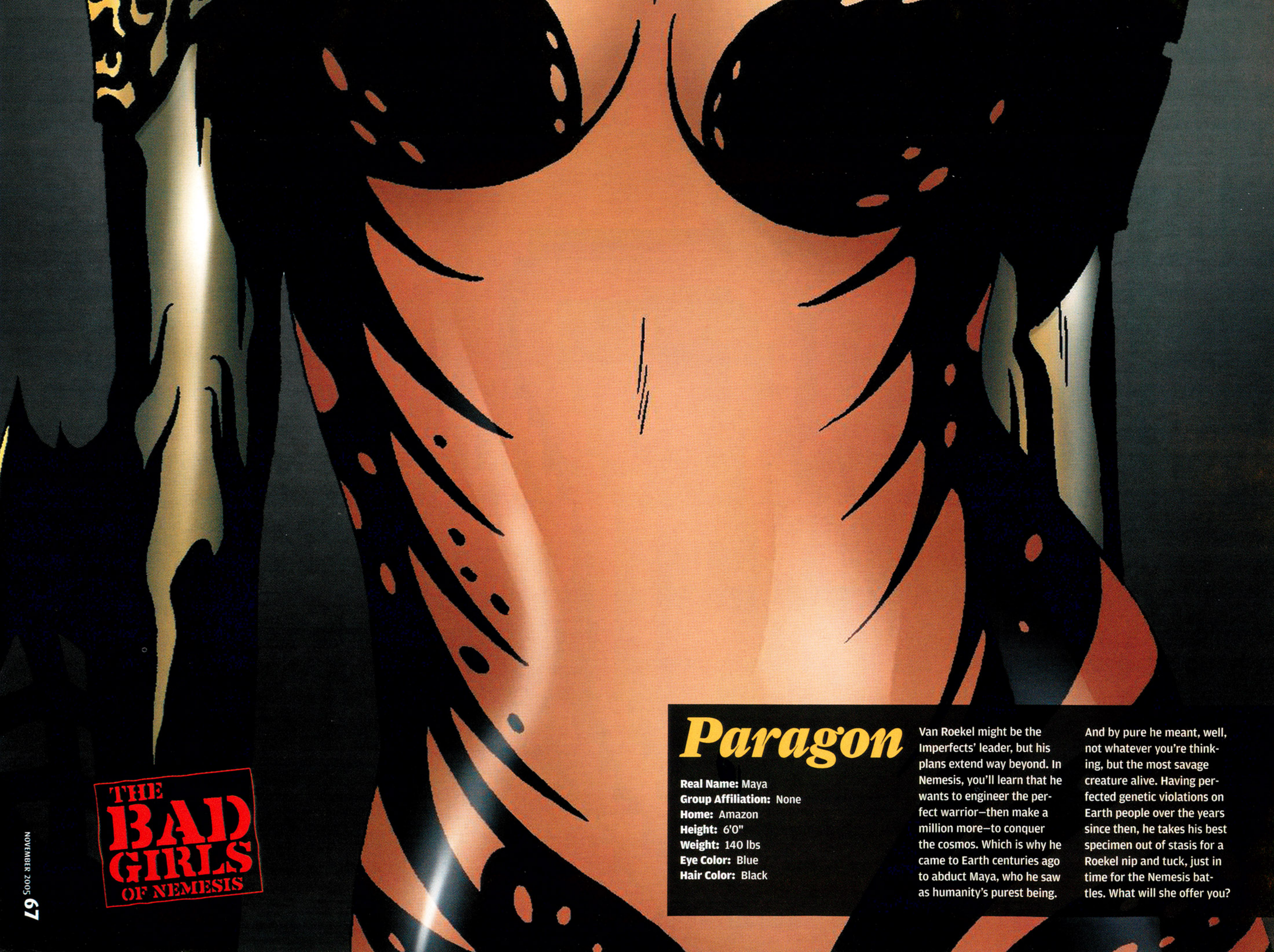
The Wink

(Right)

Real Name: Benedetta Gaetani
Group Affiliation: The Imperfects
Home: Italy
Height: 5'11"
Weight: 110 lbs
Eye Color: Yellow
Hair Color: Unknown

She's not called The Wink because she's flirtatious, unless you think that getting slashed by arm blades is her way of saying she likes ya. But even then you'd be wrong: The Wink doesn't want to get close to anyone, and was willing to let Van Roekel install a teleportation device in her thigh to ensure her elusiveness. Why the cold shoulder? Italian thugs. Her father, a stage illusionist who made Benedetta vanish in his act, was rubbed out by them when he owed money. Then the jerks threw acid on the beautiful girl's face and, deciding that they hadn't done enough to the only murder witness, sought to make her disappear for good. Benedetta fled, but The Imperfects' leader found her. So in Nemesis, The Wink will evade anyone who comes for her—and teleport in for the kill when they least expect it.


One bad mamma jamma!
She's not evil. She's not
good. She's just the very best.



Paragon

Real Name: Maya
Group Affiliation: None
Home: Amazon
Height: 6'0"
Weight: 140 lbs
Eye Color: Blue
Hair Color: Black

Van Roekel might be the Imperfects' leader, but his plans extend way beyond. In Nemesis, you'll learn that he wants to engineer the perfect warrior—then make a million more—to conquer the cosmos. Which is why he came to Earth centuries ago to abduct Maya, who he saw as humanity's purest being. And by pure he meant, well, not whatever you're thinking, but the most savage creature alive. Having perfected genetic violations on Earth people over the years since then, he takes his best specimen out of stasis for a Roekel nip and tuck, just in time for the Nemesis battles. What will she offer you?

Fruit Rings
Fruit Rings
FRUITY KITTY PEBBLES
1
2
3
HONEY BUZZ
Honey and Nut OatsyDotes

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Shredded SHREDS
SAVE $5
FRUITY KITTY PEBBLES
PRETTY okay
SQUIRLY PUFFS
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AN ARMY OF 1

Come October, Sega and The Creative Assembly will unleash hell on the GameCube with Spartan: Total Warrior. To prepare for battle, we take an in-depth look at the mythical action epic.

By Steve Thomason

MATURE 17+ M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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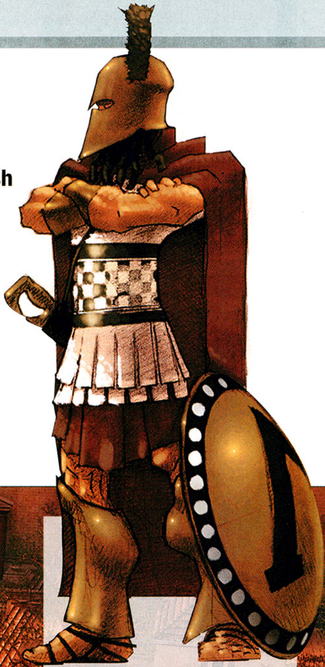
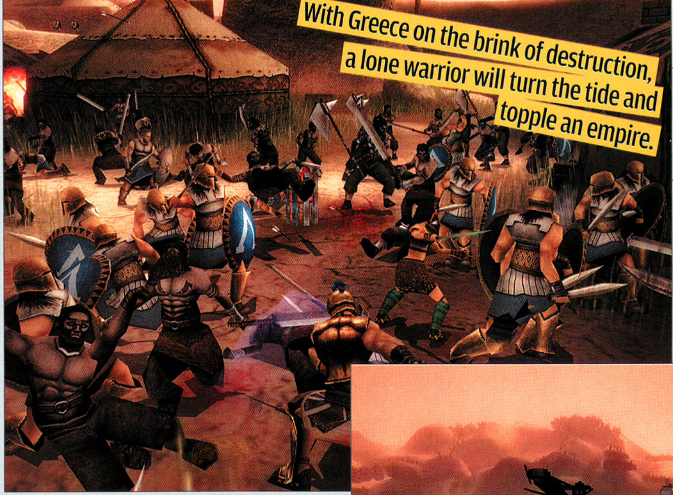


Welcome Back to the Stage of History

Many a developer has thrown hordes of warriors on screen in an effort to re-create the epic spectacle of classical warfare, but no one does it quite like the folks at The Creative Assembly. Having conquered the strategy field with their award-winning Total War series, the talented developers have decided to take on the crowded action scene. Like their previous efforts, Spartan: Total Warrior takes place in a historical setting, but they've taken some creative license to help it stand out in a genre rife with zombies, ninjas and space aliens. "We included the Spartans because they were one of the greatest warrior nations the world has ever seen," explains designer Sophie Blakemore. "Then, for their adversaries, we needed a culture that could hold their own against such men—the Romans seemed like a great choice. They were besiegers, invaders, and colonizers. Having said that, these two great cultures never actually met in reality—there was a gap of about 300 years between them. We just knew that such an awesome fight had to be seen to be believed. Like Alien vs. Predator, it was a contrived match-up, but one that had to be done."

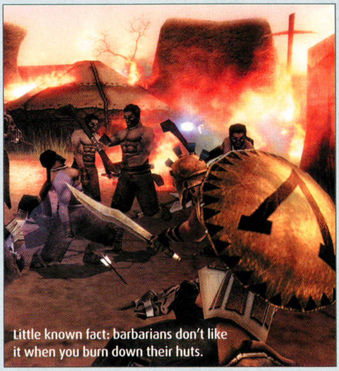


With Greece on the brink of destruction, a lone warrior will turn the tide and topple an empire.

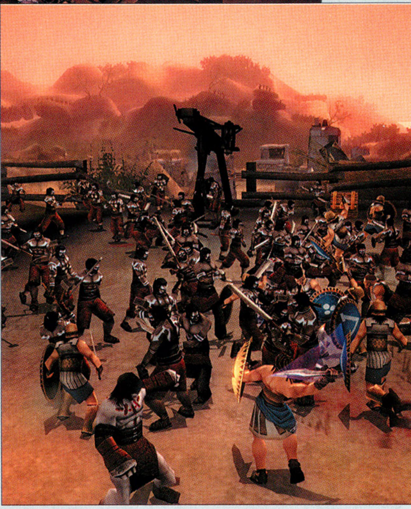
The team sought inspiration from various mythologies, as well. Spartan (the game's generically named protagonist) has been chosen by Aries, the god of war, and bestowed with the divine power to topple the Roman Empire. The forces of Caesar aren't all that stands in his way, however. He'll encounter gargantuan ogres, legions of the undead and even the legendary Beowulf (who's a little nastier in the game's interpretation than he was in the epic poem). Creating these fantastical figures wasn't an easy task for a team accustomed to working within the limitations of history. "It's been great to have more creative freedom than we're used to," says lead artist Jude Bond. "But having more to play with does present its own set of challenges, and doesn't necessarily make life easier. I mean, for example, what does a Minotaur look like? Concept artwork and prototyping of models has been really important to this project. We've reviewed and reworked the art assets all the way through the project, really, so the artwork has evolved quite a lot during development." The end result is a visual style that helps create a convincing, coherent universe. A 50-foot hydra feels no more out of place than a Roman centurion. And the surrounding environs are a sight to behold, from the ethereal catacombs of Troy to the epic majesty of the Colosseum.

Rome Wasn't Burnt in a Day

Of course, Spartan's biggest draw is the sheer size and scope of its battles; the game's impressive engine can display upward of 170 characters on screen at once. What truly sets these skirmishes apart, however, is the variety they offer from level to level, and a simple yet highly polished combat system. As lead programmer Clive Gratton points out, "Rule 1 of making an action game is 'make the combat feel good.' Rule 2 of making an action game is 'make the combat feel good.' No, wait. I got that wrong. Rule 2 is 'always put a check point before a boss.' Seriously, the feel of the combat is of paramount importance. Every strike with a weapon should give the player a little buzz of enjoyment. We spent quite a long time in the preproduction phase making sure that the combat model was very accurate. I used IK (inverse kinematics) combined with traditional hand-keyed and



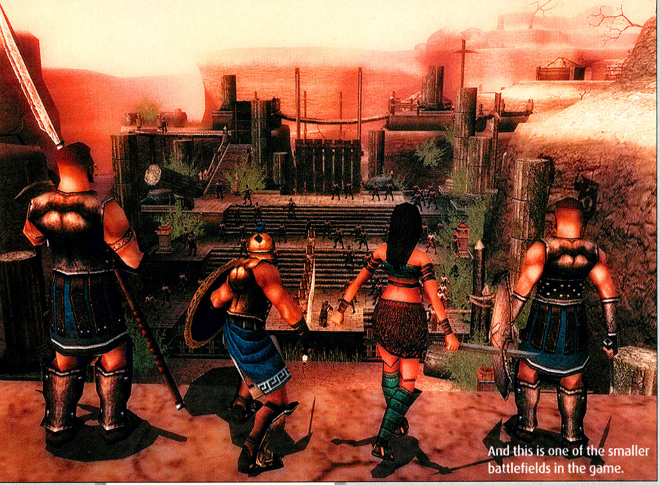
Little known fact: barbarians don't like it when you burn down their huts.



Assembly Hall

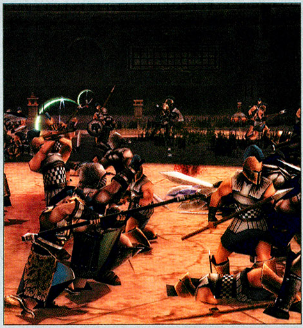
The Creative Assembly is nestled in Southwater, West Sussex, a small village in the southern English countryside. The two-story office houses two teams: the one creating Spartan, and another working on Barbarian Invasion, the expansion to Rome: Total War for the PC. When they need a break from their computer monitors, the developers can swim, fish and stage massive amphibious assaults in the beautiful lake nearby (though that last one requires a permit).

Even in rural England, parking is at a premium.



And this is one of the smaller battlefields in the game.

motion-captured animation to get the impact point of the weapon where it's required. I then used an accurate collision model of the opponent to determine whether they've been hit or not. I don't give the player too much help in getting the blade on an opponent because without the ability to miss, there's no skill involved. These elements combine to make every hit that you achieve feel really cool. In order to finish Spartan, you'll have to kill thousands of enemies. It's important that you enjoy doing it!" And to maximize that enjoyment, you'll discover an impressive assortment of weapons over the course of your quest. Each possesses unique attributes best suited to certain situations. The Twin Blades of Athena are lightning-fast and can slice through dozens of foes in a heartbeat. The Hammer of Beowulf, on the other hand, is much slower but has better range and can smash through even the heaviest armor. As you vanquish your adversaries, you'll feed your character's rage meter. Once it's full, you can unleash it to decapitate several enemies at once



Wait, which one are you again? Tomax or Xamot?

Warriors in Waiting

Here are some other themes we'd like to see receive the Total Warrior treatment:

SAMURAI

This one is an obvious choice. Though large-scale samurai battles have been tried before (see Koei's Samurai Warriors), the results have typically been lackluster. There's plenty of potential here, nonetheless, and The Creative Assembly has some experienced success with the setting (Shogun: Total War for the PC).

APACHE

The Apache were renowned for being fierce warriors and skillful strategists. There's a lot of great subject matter that's never been explored in a video game, and it would be an excellent opportunity for combat on horseback, something the development team was considering for Spartan in the initial design stages.

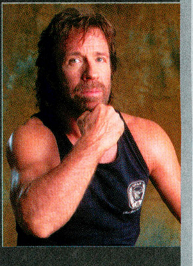
VIKING

Viking: Total Warrior seems like another no-brainer. It could borrow from Norse mythology and feature huge naval battles between warring longships. After a successful raid, you could even pillage towns for weapons and supplies. The icing on the cake would be a minigame in which you slaughter Cheeseheads.

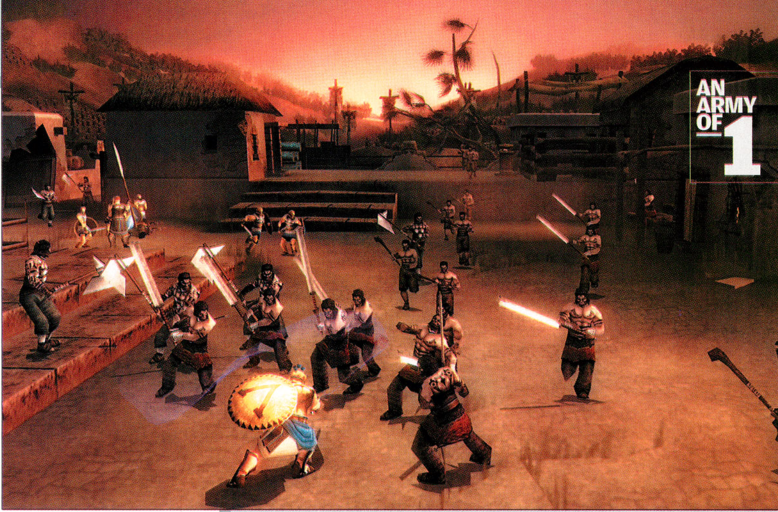
SPACE MARINE

The folks at The Creative Assembly have proven themselves in the historical arena, so we'd love to see what they could do with a sci-fi setting. Imagine something along the lines of the movie *Starship Troopers*, minus the schlocky dialogue and Doogie Howser dressed as an SS officer.

CHUCK NORRIS



He's quite possibly the single greatest warrior of all time. As the situation demands it, Chuck could switch between his various personas, including Walker, Texas Ranger, and Col. James Braddock. This should probably wait for the next-gen consoles, though, so the designers can meticulously render that trademark beard.



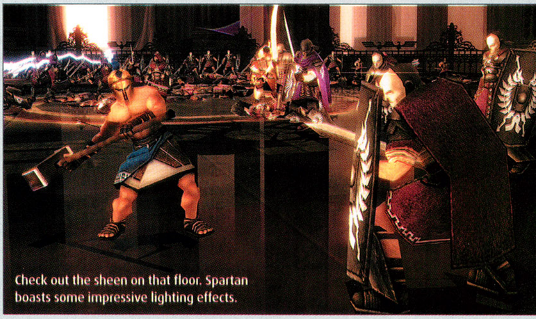
(yes, it's as satisfying as it sounds). Every weapon also comes with its own "god power" attack. The Medusa Shield, for example, turns every enemy in the vicinity into stone temporarily. The Spear of Achilles surrounds your hero with a magical flame that ignites anyone he comes in contact with. In addition to your melee weapons, you're equipped with a bow for long-range attacks. And should your personal arsenal prove insufficient, your surroundings frequently offer additional means to take out opposing forces, be it setting off an explosive or manning a rapid-fire ballista.

At the end of each stage, you're rewarded with tokens that you can put toward enhancing your strength, endurance or god power. "These light RPG elements allow the player to tailor the character toward his or her fighting style," says Blakemore. The main character will also sport more-impressive armor as you progress through the game. It doesn't have any effect on gameplay, but it's a nice visual touch to help you feel suitably badass.

Though the game is largely linear, it encourages exploration of its massive environments by scattering secret objectives throughout each level. Completing such optional tasks as destroying a siege engine or contaminating a Roman camp's water supply will unlock concept art, or bonus items for use in the game's survival-style Arena mode. You're unlikely to find all of these side quests on your first pass, which gives you a bit more incentive to play through it again.

The March of War

There's no shortage of great action games on the market, but Spartan: Total Warrior has all the makings of a breakout title. One certainly couldn't have expected much more from The Creative Assembly's first stab at the genre. Sega has to be very happy with its purchase of the developer. The two companies have every intention of making Total Warrior a franchise, and the development team is already discussing possibilities for the next installment. (We have a few ideas of our own; see the Warriors in Waiting sidebar.) For now, check out our review of Spartan on page 108.



Check out the sheen on that floor. Spartan boasts some impressive lighting effects.

Must . . . resist . . . urge . . . to make . . . M.C. Hammer joke. . . .

LIVE IN STYLE

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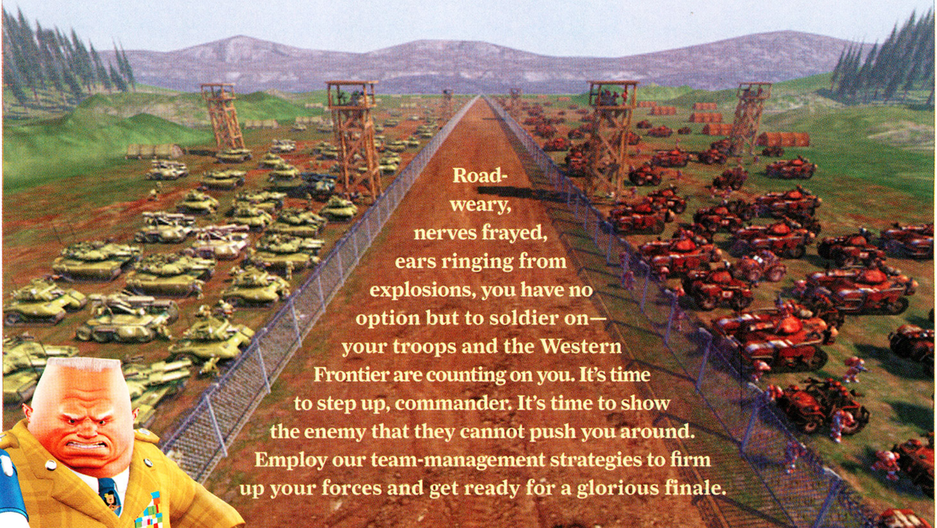
Here Comes the Boom

Nintendo's Battalion Wars has arrived on the GCN, and the noise is deafening. If you follow our momentum-building advice, you'll soon hear: "Mission accomplished."

By George Sinfield



Road-weary, nerves frayed, ears ringing from explosions, you have no option but to soldier on—your troops and the Western Frontier are counting on you. It's time to step up, commander. It's time to show the enemy that they cannot push you around. Employ our team-management strategies to firm up your forces and get ready for a glorious finale.

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE

VICTORY BY THE BOOK

Want more Battalion Wars strategies? Check out the official Nintendo Player's Guide for details on how to win every mission.

Visit www.nintendopower.com/guides/bw for more information.

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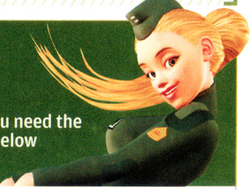
PLAN OF ATTACK



You're one heck of a soldier. That's a given. But you can't win the war all by yourself. You need the power of many and the composure to send troops in every direction. Follow the steps below to make sense out of the chaos of unit management.

STEP 1:

GATHER INTELLIGENCE

Before you make your moves, size up and identify opposing forces. Look at the available units and formulate a strategy with ally-versus-enemy matchups that work in your favor (as detailed in this article). Consider softening up the front line from a distance before you go in for closer combat. Think about how your forces perform on every type of terrain in the theater and don't be afraid to hold some units back. You may need fresh legs late in the battle.

You can't win without a good plan, but the ability to improvise on the spot and react to enemy movement is helpful, too.

STEP 2:

SEND OUT THE BIG GUNS

At all times, you should be in direct control over one of the units that is in the thick of the battle—one that can deal a lot of damage to the enemies and withstand a beating. As you fight, use the C Stick to single out allies and press the X and Y Buttons to dish out orders.

Follow Me

If the allies are on Sentry duty, on ordered attacks, or carrying out assorted types of tasks, press X to call all of them to you.

Sentry Duty

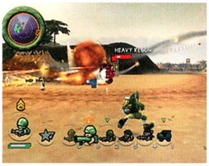
Select allies who are in Follow mode, then press the X Button to make them stop where they are and protect their position.

Take That Hill

Target an area and press the Y Button to send the selected allies to the location. Upon arrival, they'll switch to Sentry mode.

Attack at Will

Lock onto an enemy and press Y to sic all selected allies on the target. After the enemy is gone, they'll switch to Follow mode.



The command bar sorts allies by type. The easiest way to put units onto a task is to give the same order to every unit of a particular type. If a task requires more allies, send in another presorted group. You can also single out individual allies, but that takes more time than group selection.

STEP 3:

A FINGER IN EVERY POT

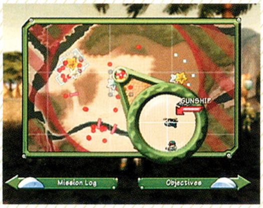
It's easy to get caught up in one part of a multifront battle. But to ensure victory, you'll have to keep enemy forces in check. Evaluate the progress of your forces often and make sure that every group has the right configuration for the task at hand. Also, switch your direct control to the place where your attention is needed most. The unit that you control is more powerful than any unit of its type.

The art of delegating is in putting units into situations where you know they can succeed, and letting them carry out orders without you.

THE BIG PICTURE

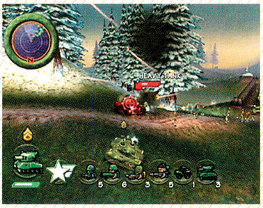
When you're commanding a large force, you need to know where your units are and how they are progressing toward their goals at all times. Use the satellite map and overhead-view Global mode to keep track of how the battle is taking shape.

SATELLITE MAP



The satellite map shows every unit in the playing area; there's a sight cone on your currently controlled unit and a magnifying glass that identifies units. Use the map to scout enemies and to switch control quickly between units that are on two sides of the battlefield.

GLOBAL MODE



By tapping any direction on the Control Pad, you can toggle Global mode on and off. Use it to get a classic RTS view of the action—with walls and obstacles out of the way. The camera will remain attached to your current unit and rotate as your unit turns.

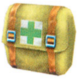
STEP 4:

ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES

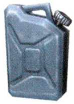
Many missions have natural lulls in the action—you've accomplished one goal and you're ready to move on to the next area, or you're waiting for the enemies to make a move. At those moments, gather your forces, assess the damage and decide whether you are able to continue with the plan or whether you have to go with a different set of tactics. At times, your forces will be banged up or depleted. Get them into fighting shape before your next move.

Every defeated enemy soldier leaves a Medi-Pack, which any of your soldiers can use to recover health. Every vehicle and aircraft leaves a Jerry Can, which will repair any of your vehicles or aircraft. AI-controlled units seek out health pickups, but it's a good idea for you to look at the status of your units midmission and guide the weak ones to pickups.

Medi-Pack



Jerry Can



STRATEGY IN ACTION

The best way to learn the intricacies of Battalion Wars is by example. The following is a step-by-step account of the first mission on the Coral Atolls. You'll command soldiers, ground vehicles and aircraft in your attempt to run down Kaiser Vlad's island forces.

CAMPAIGN 3: XDAY

The Western Frontier army has teamed up with the Tundran army to take on the Xylvanians in Solar Empire territory. Members of the Frontier air force are being held captive. Free them, then take the fight to the skies.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

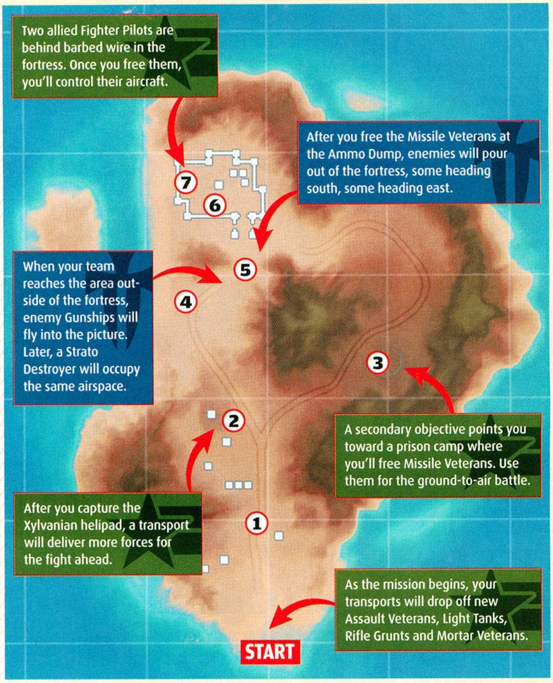
Gold stars that are on the satellite map and that float above sections of the environment denote the locations of primary objectives. Complete one primary objective to trigger the appearance of the next one.

- A Assault the BEACH
- B Assault Vlad's FORTRESS
- C Clear the skies of ENEMY AIRCRAFT
- D Eliminate the STRATO DESTROYER

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

Secondary objectives often involve activities that you will engage in on your way to completing primary objectives. Completing a secondary objective may result in a reward of additional units.

- A Destroy the ARTILLERY
- B Capture the HELIPAD
- C Rescue the MISSILE VETERANS
- D Rescue the FIGHTER PILOTS



Two allied Fighter Pilots are behind barbed wire in the fortress. Once you free them, you'll control their aircraft.

After you free the Missile Veterans at the Ammo Dump, enemies will pour out of the fortress, some heading south, some heading east.

When your team reaches the area outside of the fortress, enemy Gunships will fly into the picture. Later, a Strato Destroyer will occupy the same airspace.

A secondary objective points you toward a prison camp where you'll free Missile Veterans. Use them for the ground-to-air battle.

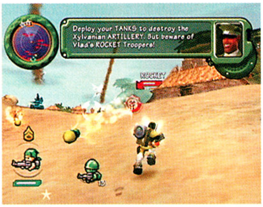
After you capture the Xylvanian helipad, a transport will deliver more forces for the fight ahead.

As the mission begins, your transports will drop off new Assault Veterans, Light Tanks, Rifle Grunts and Mortar Veterans.

- A Assault the BEACH
- A Destroy the ARTILLERY

① SAND STORM—TAKE THE BEACH RUNNING

Xylvanian Artillery units will attempt to end your mission before it begins. Leave your Rifle Grunts in Sentry mode near the water and move up the beach with Assault Veterans, Mortar Veterans and Light Tanks. Leave the Mortar units and Light Tanks at the barbed wire near the top of the beach while your Assault units defeat five enemy Rocket units that protect the Artillery. The faster you work, the less damage the Artillery will do. Once the Rocket units are out of the way, have your Assault units switch places with your Mortar units and Light Tanks, and use the heavy-shell lobbers to defeat the enemy Artillery.



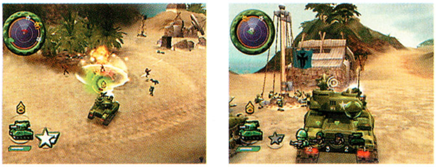
Deploy your TANKS to destroy the Xylvanian ARTILLERY. But beware of Vlad's ROCKET Troopers!

Use Assault Vets to blast the Rocket units while your tanks are out of rocket range. Keep the allies away from Artillery machine-gun fire.

Capture the HELIPAD

② HELLO, HELIPAD

With the beach area cleared and the Artillery units gone, leave all soldiers at the top of the beach and use one or both of your Light Tanks to move onto the Xylvanian helipad, taking out a total of three MG Towers along the way. Acid Gas units will attack at the helipad, but they won't be any match for your tanks. Run them over or let your tanks' gunners take care of them. Once the coast is clear, call in the rest of your forces.

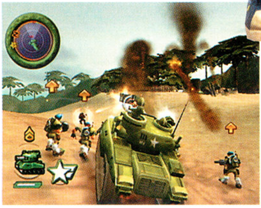


Have your tanks deal with the gas emitters, then put Rifle Grunts on the job of replacing the Xylvanian flag with the Frontier flag. Leave the Grunts behind while you head up the hill.

Rescue the MISSILE VETERANS

③ BREAK CAMP

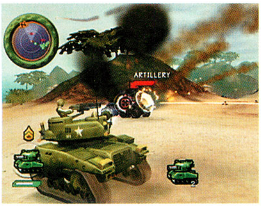
As you make your way to the prison camp, put your Mortar units in Sentry mode. Use Assault units to defeat the oncoming Rifle Grunts and at least two allied tanks to blast apart the enemy tank. With those forces out of the way, switch to a Mortar unit and lead the charge to the camp, tanks and Assault units in tow. The camp's liberation will trigger an enemy attack from two directions. Consolidate your army at the bottom of the hill and hold your position.



An MG Tower should be your first target in the prison camp. After the tower falls, take on the Grenade units, then blast a barrel. The barrel's explosion will knock down the fence and free the prisoners.

④ VEHICULAR ASSAULT

Reinforcements on the helipad will be fighting the enemy's forward forces by the time the rest of your units come back from the prison camp. Call all units together and use a Light Tank to lead the charge north. Run over enemy Grunts and use tanks, Missile units and Mortar units to attack the enemy Artillery unit while your gun-toters take on the Rocket units nearby.

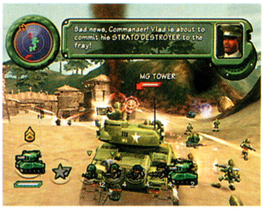


Artillery units have a way of thinning out your forces in a hurry. Blast the cannon on wheels using as much explosive firepower as you can muster.

Assault Vlad's FORTRESS

⑤ GATE CRASHERS

The entrance to Kaiser Vlad's fortress is fortified with two Light Tanks, three MG Towers and multiple Rocket and Rifle units. Keep your Rifle Grunts and MG Towers on the periphery while the rest of your forces clear out the fortress defenses. As soon as you hear that Xylvanian Gunships have taken to the skies, employ your Missile units to pick them off. The battle will be chaotic, but you'll have the upper hand.



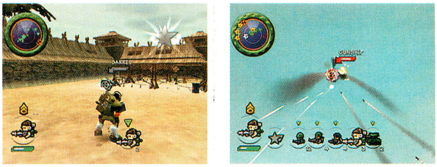
Bad news, Commander! Vlad is about to commit his STRATO DESTROYER to the fray!

During the battle, Colonel Austin will warn you that Gunships and then Strato Destroyers are on their way.

Rescue the FIGHTER PILOTS

⑥ MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME

As the skirmish at the gates is winding down, put the bulk of your remaining units in Sentry mode to have them continue to blast away at the enemies and pump up your power stats, and assemble a small group of Missile units to enter the fortress itself. Once inside the walls, use the unit that is under your direct control to destroy a barrel, liberating the Fighter Pilots, while the rest of your Missile units go after the Gunships that hover nearby.



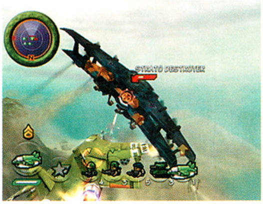
Get into the fortress and take over. A total of four Gunships will rain missiles and gunfire down on your troops. Use Missile units to knock them out of the sky. Keep in mind that Missiles are more powerful when they are charged up.

Clear the skies of ENEMY AIRCRAFT

Eliminate the STRATO DESTROYER

⑦ TAKE TO THE SKIES

After you've eliminated the first wave of Gunships, a second wave will appear, along with the awesome Strato Destroyer. Use your Fighters and Missile units to take out the Gunships, then go after the the big plane. The Strato Destroyer's weak point is at its rear. Get on its six and blast away using your Fighters' missiles.



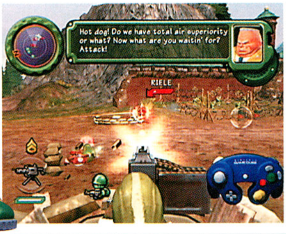
Use both Fighters (one of them under your direct control) to take down the Strato Destroyer. The aircraft is equipped with lock-on missiles. You can lose the missile lock by flying below radar range. If either of your fighters is low on armor, direct it to a floating Jerry Can for a quick repair.

INFANTRY UNITS

We begin our examination of the units that fall under your control by focusing on a few good men—the infantry. They can't take as much damage as other units can, but they're agile and they all hold an important place in the Frontier army.

RIFLE GRUNT

Essentially pawns in the chess game that is Battalion Wars, Rifle Grunts are not equipped with as much armor as the Veteran units wear, making them more vulnerable to enemy fire. They do, however, have the ability to fire from a greater distance than any other gun-equipped unit, due to the long range of their M17 rifles.



Hot dog! Do we have total air superiority or what? Now what are you waitin' for? Attack!

When you find an unoccupied MG Nest or MG Bunker that looks over the battlefield, assign a Rifle Grunt to the post. The protection will allow him to live longer and do more damage. If the enemies destroy the nest, though, the Grunt will expire. Take control over him before that happens, and have him jump out.

ATTACK

- Infantry units

AVOID

- Flame and Acid Gas units
- Ground vehicles
- Aircraft

BAZOOKA VETERAN

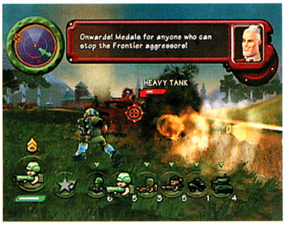
When you need to take down a tank, send in the big guns. Bazooka Veterans are ground-vehicle specialists. Their shots are too slow to track down most soldiers, but they pack a wallop that will damage any type of armor. If you get a few Bazooka Vets close to a vehicle (but out of range of the vehicle's guns), they will make short work of it. You can charge up a Bazooka's shot by holding the A Button.

ATTACK

- Ground vehicles

AVOID

- Rifle Grunts
- Flame and Acid Gas units
- Assault and Minigun units
- Aircraft



Onwards! Medals for anyone who can stop the Frontier aggressors!

The bad thing about Bazooka projectiles is that they're very slow. If you attempt to attack a tank from the side, it might be able to roll out of the way before the explosive hits. Move in close to the vehicle and circle it as you fire to avoid its gunfire.

FLAME VETERAN

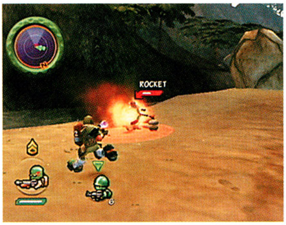
When you're feeling like a barbeque, call in the Flame Veterans. Their high-pressure incendiary projectors will charbroil any infantry units or Light Recon units, but they have no effect on armored tanks or Artillery. Since Flame Vets must attack at very short range, you'll be most likely to succeed if you take direct control over one of them.

ATTACK

- Infantry units

AVOID

- Ground vehicles
- Aircraft



If your Veteran's Flamethrower overheats, the soldier will be out of commission for a few seconds. Watch the weapon's heat gauge and stop firing if it gets too close to the top. Short flame bursts with pauses in between are the best way to go.

MISSILE VETERAN

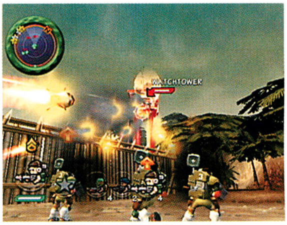
Missile Veterans are aircraft-grounding specialists. When you hear the whir of a Gunship's blades and see the explosions from its missiles, you'll be happy that you've kept your missile launchers safe. Single out the offending aircraft and put all of your Missile Vets on the task of shooting it down. The craft's flight plan will change within seconds.

ATTACK

- Gunships
- Fighters
- Bombers
- Strato Destroyers

AVOID

- Rifle Grunts
- Flame and Acid Gas units
- Assault and Minigun units



Though they are trained to take down aircraft, Missile Vets will have some success against ground vehicles and static emplacements. Use Missile Veterans if the situation calls for it, but be careful: you'll need them when the Gunships attack.

ASSAULT VETERAN

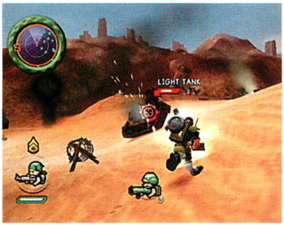
If Rifle Grunts are pawns in this game, Assault Veterans are superpawns. Their M70s aren't accurate at long ranges, but they're powerful enough to take out Light Tanks and Gunships. Use them as your forward units in skirmishes against large infantries.

ATTACK

- Infantry units
- Light and Heavy Recon units
- Light Tanks
- Gunships

AVOID

- Flame and Acid Gas units
- Heavy Tanks
- Battlestations



Like the Flame Vets' weapons, M70s overheat after constant use. Watch the meter and stop firing before it tops out and causes the weapon to jam. Short bursts of machine-gun fire are very effective.

MORTAR VETERAN

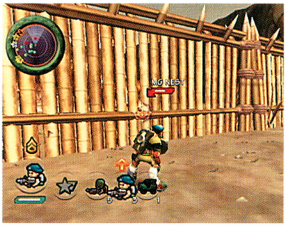
Bringing up the rear, Mortar Veterans can fire over friendly forces and rain shells down on the enemies. They also serve as perfect companions to allied ground vehicles by providing support in battles versus enemy tanks, Artillery and static emplacements.

ATTACK

- Static targets such as MG Nests
- Ground vehicles

AVOID

- Infantry units
- Aircraft

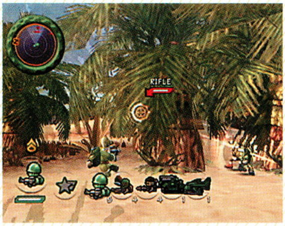


Mortar Vets can fire over walls and other obstacles, allowing you to soften enemy forces before you attack with the rest of your army. By charging up their shots before releasing them, you can increase the range of the explosions.

INFANTRY TACTICS

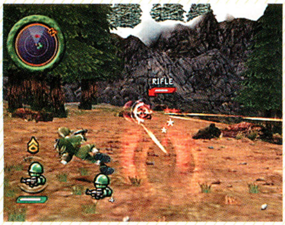
Though their weapons vary widely in strength and specialty, infantry units are similar in the way they move and (except for grunts) in their armor strength. Have them stay together and attack in groups.

SWIFT AND SQUIRRELY



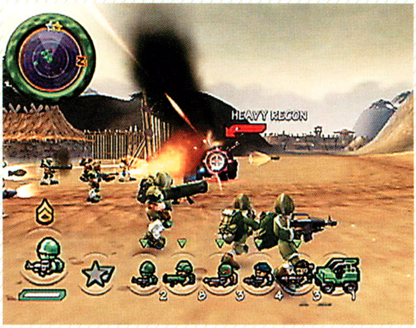
Areas with a lot of obstacles offer an advantage to infantry units over vehicles. Soldiers on foot can often find shortcuts in places where vehicles have to stay on the main road.

ROLL IF YOU WANT TO



When an infantry unit is locked onto a target, a tap of the B Button will trigger a roll maneuver. Soldiers aren't able to shoot midroll, but the move often keeps them from taking damage while in the line of fire.

POWER IN NUMBERS



Infantry units do best in short and sweet battles in which they can attack enemies in large groups and neutralize the opposing forces quickly. If their numbers are large enough, they can even be effective against vehicles at close range.

HIDE AND SNEAK

In areas where there are sandbags and fallen logs, infantry units in Sentry mode will seek out cover behind the obstacles and fight from a fortified position. The tactic is particularly effective when enemy infantry units are attempting to run through the area.

VEHICLE UNITS

Though infantry units are far from expendable, your army can withstand the loss of a few soldiers. You'll feel your overall force weaken, however, when one of your vehicles bites the dust. They are key ingredients for ground-bound victory.

LIGHT RECON

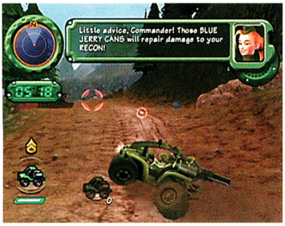
The MX-500 Dervish is not a powerful vehicle by any means, and it can't withstand a lot of damage, but it sure is fast. Keep it moving at all times and use it to scope out enemy territory before you send in the troops. One version of the vehicle has a single HMG. Another version has two guns. Neither is equipped to take on other vehicles.

ATTACK

- Infantry units

AVOID

- Bazooka and Rocket units
- Gunships
- Light and Heavy tanks
- Battlestations



Little advice, Commander! Those BLUE JERRY CANS will repair damage to your RECON!

Light Recon units are fast and just a little difficult to drive. They tend to bounce on rough terrain and flip on sharp turns. Keep your eye on the road, or you might get the vehicle caught behind an obstacle, making it a sitting duck.

HEAVY RECON

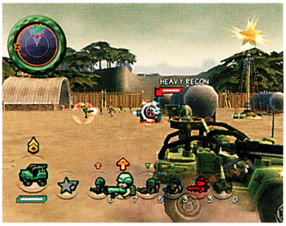
Though still more of an infantry-neutralizing vehicle than one that can go toe-to-toe with a tank, the Heavy Recon unit has better armor and stronger weapons than its lighter brother. It's slower, too, but that lack of speed may ultimately make it easier to drive.

ATTACK

- Infantry units

AVOID

- Bazooka and Rocket units
- Gunships
- Light and Heavy tanks
- Battlestations



Strong armor makes the Heavy Recon unit a good candidate for leading troops into heavily populated areas. Scream into an enemy stronghold, target enemies for your allies to finish off, then exit before your vehicle is toast.

LIGHT TANK

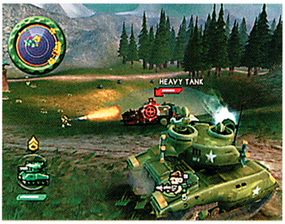
The standard battle tank for the Western Frontier is equipped with a 100mm cannon and an HMG. For a tank, it is very maneuverable, making it well-suited to plowing through enemy troops and taking on larger vehicles, such as Heavy Tanks and Artillery units.

ATTACK

- Light and Heavy tanks
- AA Vehicles
- Artillery

AVOID

- Bazooka and Rocket units
- Gunships
- Bombers
- Strato Destroyers



Easy to control and versatile, the Light Tank is the perfect vehicle for many situations. You can use it to take out larger tanks by locking on and circling the target. Just stay away from Bazooka and Rocket units.

HEAVY TANK

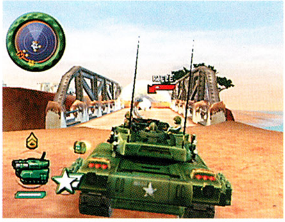
The M1A5 Main Battle Tank (aka the Hermanator) is not nearly as maneuverable as the Light Tank, but when you're as well-armored and well-armed as the Hermanator, you don't need to get around very quickly. Other ground units don't pose much of a threat.

ATTACK

- Light and Heavy tanks
- AA Vehicles
- Artillery
- Battlestations

AVOID

- Bazooka and Rocket units
- Gunships
- Bombers
- Strato Destroyers



The two-barreled blast of the Heavy Tank creates a lot of collateral damage. Not only is it effective against other large vehicles, but it can deplete concentrated groups of infantry units in a hurry.

AA VEHICLE

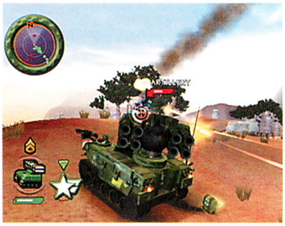
The vehicular equivalent of the Missile Veteran is an airplane-grounding specialist unit. If you charge its shot, it will fire eight missiles in rapid succession. Keep it surrounded with supporting forces.

ATTACK

- Gunships
- Fighters
- Bombers
- Strato Destroyers

AVOID

- Bazooka and Rocket units
- Light and Heavy tanks
- Battlestations



The Anti-Air Vehicle's weapons can't lock onto targets that are below radar range, but you can still get lucky with a shot loosely aimed at a large vehicle or group of infantry units.

ARTILLERY

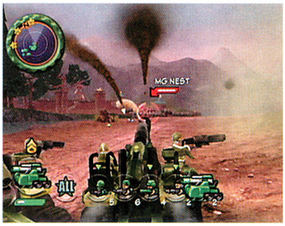
Like Mortar Veterans, Artillery units play a key role in large battles. Keep them in the back of the pack and lob shots at static or slow-moving enemies. They can soften up the opposing forces in preparation for a large-scale push.

ATTACK

- Static Targets such as MG Nests
- Light and Heavy Tanks

AVOID

- Bazooka and Rocket units
- Light and Heavy tanks
- Battlestations



In situations where a few enemy MG Nests are mixed in with infantry, you can knock the MG Nests out from a distance with an Artillery unit, then mop up with the rest of your ground forces.

BATTLESTATION

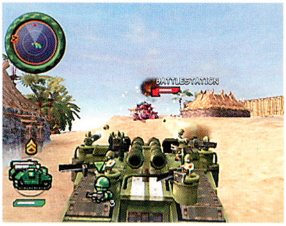
The most powerful vehicle in the Western Frontier army is also the slowest, but once it gets to its destination, the enemy will find it hard to stop. A double-barreled battle cannon, two anti-vehicle turrets and three HMGs mean trouble to all but enemy air units.

ATTACK

- Light and Heavy tanks
- Artillery units
- AA Vehicles

AVOID

- Bazooka and Rocket units
- Gunships
- Bombers
- Strato Destroyers



The Battlestation's double-barreled cannon is fixed on the front of the vehicle and does not swivel. You must move the vehicle to aim at enemies.

VEHICLE TACTICS

One vehicle can sway a battle's momentum big time. The best way to march to victory is to eliminate enemy ground units and preserve your own by targeting vehicle-destroying Rocket units.

HIT AND RUN

Most vehicles don't have the right weapons to defeat infantry units, but the vehicles themselves can be used as weapons. Have an armored beast plow through enemy troops.

STAY CENTERED

In the heat of battle, it's easy to get into a situation where your tank is pointed in one direction and its turret is pointed in another direction. If you don't know whether you're coming or going, let go of the Control Stick and allow your vehicle to straighten out on its own.

WATCH FOR ROCKS

Rough terrain and obstacles, especially trees and rocks, can be trouble for most vehicles, but you can go right over sandbags. Press and hold the B Button if your vehicle needs extra traction.

AIRCRAFT UNITS

You'll deal with enemy Gunships for a few missions before you have control over aircraft of your own. Once you are in the skies, you'll have the whole package—a dual ground-and-air threat. The key is knowing how to get your aircraft and ground units to work together for a unified attack.

GUNSHIP

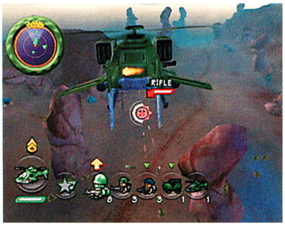
The Duey AH-86 Gunship is equipped with AMG-115 Heckfire missiles and is very easy to maneuver. You can use it to chase other aircraft or to hover above the field and pick off ground units.

ATTACK

- Infantry units
- Ground vehicles

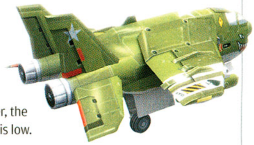
AVOID

- Missile and Ack-Ack units
- AA Vehicles
- Fighters
- Strato Destroyers



With enemy aircraft out of the picture, you can rule the skies in a Gunship—just keep an eye out for anti-aircraft emplacements and order your ground units to defeat them before your Gunship gets too close. Use the Gunship as your perch from which to issue orders.

FIGHTER



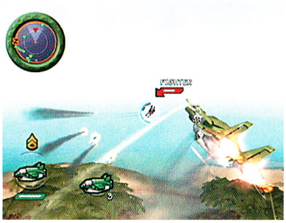
The fastest aircraft in the Frontier army is equipped with twin air-to-air Silverfish missile pods that will take down enemy aircraft in a hurry. However, the Fighter's accuracy against ground units is low.

ATTACK

- Gunships
- Fighters
- Strato Destroyers

AVOID

- Missile and Ack-Ack units
- AA Vehicles



Speed is important in air battles, especially when you are going up against Fighters that could lay waste to your air units. Lock onto an enemy craft, send out a full load of missiles, then move on to the next target. You'll see the initial target disappear on your radar after it's gone.

BOMBER

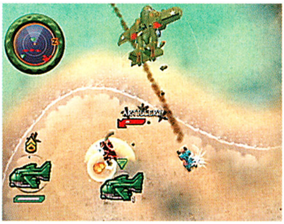
Though it is sluggish and a large target for ground units, the Valentine B-58 is plated with very strong armor. Chances are that any units attacking it from the ground will be history once it unloads its supply of explosives.

ATTACK

- Infantry units
- Ground vehicles

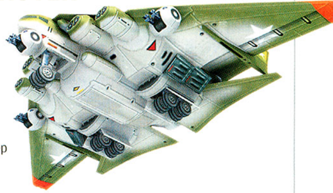
AVOID

- Missile and Ack-Ack units
- AA Vehicles
- Fighters
- Strato Destroyers



If you're controlling a Bomber directly, switch to the overhead Global view for a better look at your target. When you're controlling ground units, remember to keep your Bombers on runs and away from other aircraft.

STRATO DESTROYER



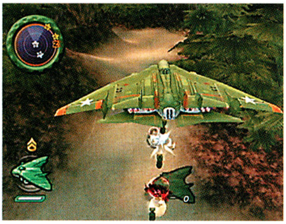
There's nothing quite like the B-5000 Strato Destroyer, a legitimate threat to both aircraft and ground units. The plane's weak spots are its underbelly and tail. Use evasive maneuvers to keep enemy craft out of the rear view.

ATTACK

- Infantry units
- Ground vehicles
- Gunships
- Bombers

AVOID

- Missile and Ack-Ack units
- AA Vehicles
- Fighters

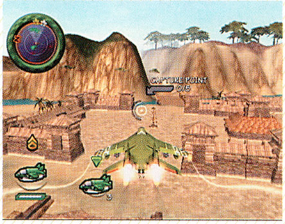


When you lock onto an aircraft then fire, your Strato Destroyer will shoot missiles. When you're approaching a ground target, it will launch missiles, then switch to bombs once it is within bombing range.

AIRCRAFT TACTICS

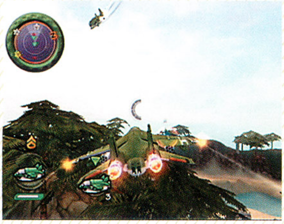
It's no coincidence that air units are the last type you will learn to control and command. They've got a huge upside, but they add a new dimension of complexity to the battle.

LOCK OUT ENEMY LOCK-ON



Your aircraft are equipped with sensors that beep when a missile is on your tail. Fly below radar range to lose the lock-on and watch the missiles zip past your craft.

LOOK OUT FOR LAND



At times, you'll need to fly close to land—either mesas that jut up into the sky (in a tight area) or flat ground (when you're trying to avoid radar detection). Even brushing up against a tree can cause damage. Pull up and out of danger.

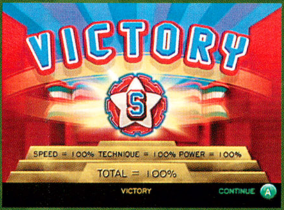
T-COPTER TROUBLE

Though transports are great to have on your side, you'll deal with a lot of enemy delivery craft, too. As soon as you're aware that an opposing transport is in the mission area, find a way to shoot it down. If you destroy it before it lands, you'll do away with its contents.

I THINK I CAN. I THINK I CAN.

Jerry Cans repair your aircraft. Every enemy aircraft and vehicle that you destroy will leave one behind. As soon as you defeat an enemy, fly through the explosion to collect the can. Your craft can be a good distance away from a Jerry Can and still collect it. If you're set on grabbing a can that is on the ground, fly over it with good clearance and keep from skimming the land.

IS YOUR PERFORMANCE RANK?



The letter ranking that you earn upon successful completion is based on your performance in three categories. The Power category concerns how much damage you've inflicted on the enemies. Technique looks at how much they've damaged your units. The Speed rating is determined by how quickly you stormed through the mission.

RANKING PERCENTAGES

S RANKING	95% - 100%
A RANKING	85% - 94%
B RANKING	75% - 84%
C RANKING	0% - 74%

BONUS MISSIONS: JOIN THE OPPOSITION

Your best efforts earn you a position with the other side. High overall campaign percentages unlock missions in which you play the bad guy.

Score 85% or better in the first three campaigns or 90%-plus in the fourth campaign to enter a bonus mission in one of the main-campaign locales. Though your new soldiers look different, they behave similar to Frontier soldiers.

TEST YOUR MEMORY

Your DS becomes a DTS (Dual Trace System) in Trace Memory. Learn the tricks of the Trace in our detailed walk-through of Chapters 1 and 2.

By George Sinfield

Ashley Robbins is the recipient of a two-screen machine and a note from her long-missing father at the beginning of Nintendo's Trace Memory. By using your DS as Ashley would her DTS, you guide her to and through a creaky old manor on Blood Edward Island. Careful exploration and clever use of the hardware will get you to your goal. We offer you a head start with solutions for one-third of the game's puzzles.

How many times do we have to tell you? If there are ghosts and creepy scientists on the island, stay off the freakin' island!

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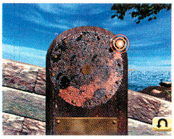
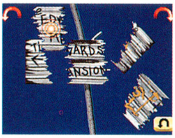
CHAPTER 1
Ghost Memories

The story opens with a boat ride to Blood Edward Island and an opportunity to get acquainted with Ashley's backstory. Ashley's aunt, Jessica, can speak on various topics. During your conversation, Ashley will demonstrate the DTS's picture-taking feature, something that will come in handy in several puzzles. After you land, you'll chat with the captain of the boat then set off to search for Ashley's father and the now-missing Jessica.

Bridge and Sign Repair

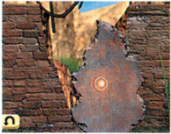
When you approach the island drawbridge, someone on the other side will raise it. Take a sturdy hold of the rusty crank on your side of the bridge and turn it slowly to complete the span. After you cross the bridge, you'll find a locked grounds gate and a broken sign. Piece together the sign to reveal a clue.

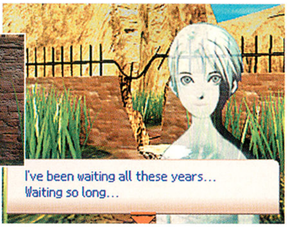




Ghost Host

Not able to unlock the gate, you'll follow the path into the graveyard. Read the gravestones to recall a family name that the boat captain mentioned. Walk to the eastern edge of the graveyard and use touch control to move a heavy stone out of the way. After the stone falls over, you'll be visited by a ghost kid, D.

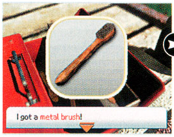




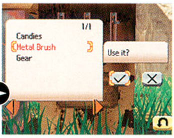
I've been waiting all these years...
Waiting so long...

Mining for Clues

Follow the path east, then north to the old gold mine. Look closely at the rock grinder—you'll find a rusty plate. Attempt to scratch it, then back away. Investigate the toolbox on the table nearby and collect the metal brush. Use the brush on the rusty plate to expose a symbol. Before you leave, grab the gear from the toolbox near the mine cart.



I got a metal brush!

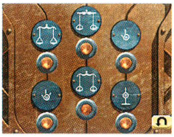


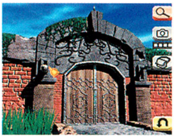
1/1
Candies
Metal Brush
Gear
Use it?

Use the metal brush on the rusty plate and rub away.

Gear Up to Unlock the Gate and Doors

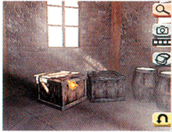
When you return to the grounds gate, use the gear in the lock mechanism, then push two buttons on the lock to re-create the symbol that you saw on the sign and the metal plate. The gate will open. Move on to the mansion's gate and look at the hand sculptures on each side. The one on the right is missing a sphere.

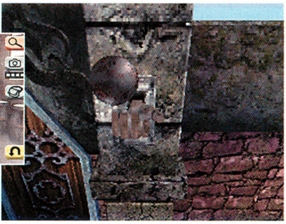




Loaded Lodge

There are several items in the porter's lodge. Ashley won't let you leave the lodge until you've collected the paper cover and DTS Card 00. Speak to D outside. Return to the lodge and pick up an iron sphere from a crate. Toss the sphere into the empty hand to open the main door.





Memory Quiz

Before you complete a chapter, Ashley will stop to remember what she has learned. The session will take place in the form of a quiz. Chapter 1's questions and answers are shown below.

Q A few days ago, I got a letter from my father. Before that, I believed that he had died when I was three. Using the letter, I tracked him to the island, but when we arrived, he wasn't here. The first person who went off looking for him was . . .

A Jessica

Q In the past there was a wealthy family that lived on this island. But they died of mysterious causes, leaving the island empty. The name of the family was . . .

A Edward

Q After I moved a big stone slab off the hole in the cemetery wall, I met a ghost named D. At first, D didn't have any memories of his life. But when he talked to me, he remembered something. It was . . .

A His father

Q I found Jessica's glasses by the door of the porter's lodge. I went inside the lodge looking for her. I found a DTS card there containing a message from Dad. I also found a briefcase. Inside the briefcase, there was . . .

A The cover of a research paper

DTS Checklist

Your travels through Chapter 1 will earn you several items; some are required for puzzle solving, and others help complete pieces of the story.

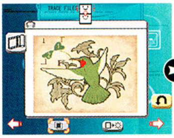
1. Candies: Receive them as a gift from the captain.
2. Metal Brush: Collect it from the toolbox on the table.
3. Gear: Take it from the toolbox near the cart.
4. Eyeglasses: Find them in front of the porter's lodge.
5. Photo of My Mom: Look in the pocket of the lab coat on the lodge floor.
6. Paper Cover: Look inside the briefcase on a desk in the lodge.
7. DTS Card 00: Look near the books on the desk in the lodge.
8. Iron Sphere: Collect it from a crate in the lodge after you've investigated the door.

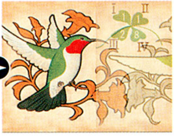
CHAPTER 2

The House of Edward

D follows Ashley into the mansion. The memories that he recovers from looking at artifacts within the mansion will help you understand the story of the Edward family and give you information on how to proceed. There's nothing to be afraid of here: just a ghost and a dusty old house.

Bird-Watching





Inspect the bird statue in the middle of the foyer, then look at and take photographs of the the two bird paintings on the walls. Use the DTS to view one of the photos and send it to the upper screen, then overlay the second photo and position it to complete the four-leaf clover. The door-lock code is in the clover.

Music from Another Room

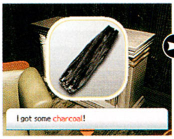
When you arrive in Slate Hall, walk to the far end of the corridor and take a close look at the painting of Lawrence Edward. That will trigger a memory from D and the sound of a piano. D will tell you that the sound is coming from the music room.

Clues and Puzzles, No Solutions

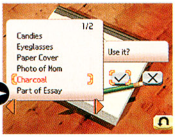
Walk south from the painting, then open the first door on the west side of the corridor. You'll enter the music room. Take a look at the piano and the portrait on the far wall, then advance to the bookshelf on the north end of the room. You'll find papers on the floor, among them a part of an essay on the Trace project. Examine the white books on the shelf. When you try to arrange them, you'll discover that three books are missing.

Hidden Message

Walk across the hall to the butler's room. You'll find a DTS card and a notepad with a missing page on the desk. When you use a pencil on the pad to try to read the pad impression, the pencil will break. Look in the fireplace at the south end of the room. You'll find charcoal. Use it on the notepad. Before you leave, collect a white book from the bookcase.

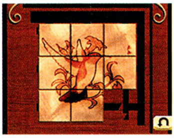


I got some charcoal!



Use the charcoal on the pad to reveal a message.

Wardrobe Discoveries



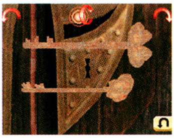
Upstairs in the butler's room, you'll find three large wardrobes. Open them to find a letter, a photo album, a notebook and a scroll that will fill you in on the story of the Edward family and its two sons, Henry and Thomas. In the far-right wardrobe, you'll find a wooden puzzle. Slide the tiles to complete the picture. Your efforts will net you the silver medal. Use it in the foyer's bird statue to get the sprout key.

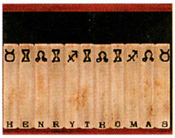
A Key, a Book and an Angel

Use the sprout key to open the first door on the east side of the hall, and enter the Golden Bird room. Examine the bookcase to find a second white book. Up the stairs, look in the lower-right window of the cabinet to discover a second sprout key in the Golden Bird glass. Study the desk in the southeast corner of the room to find a doll that depicts an angel holding a drum. You'll return for it in a later chapter.

Two Halves Make a Whole

Cross the hall and try to open the last door with each sprout key, then combine the keys to create the clover key. That will get you into the room. Once inside the Silver Bird room, collect the last white book. Return to the music room and arrange the books to spell HENRYTHOMAS.





Memory Quiz

The books in the music room will give you a tune to play on the piano. Plunk on the keys in the proper order to open the passage to the next chapter. Before you go, another quiz.

Q D and I entered the mansion once occupied by the Edward family. We were hoping to find my dad and more clues to D's past. In the foyer, there were two paintings and a sculpture of birds. The sprout key that was hidden inside the bird sculpture opened . . .

A The Golden Bird room

Q I discovered from the wardrobe in the butler's room that Leonard, the son of the master of this mansion, Lawrence, left the house and had two sons. Leonard fell ill and died young, so Lawrence gained custody of the boys, Henry and Thomas. In preparation for their arrival, Lawrence arranged two rooms. These two rooms were called the Golden Bird room and . . .

A The Silver Bird room

Q The mysteries linger. D still can't remember the name of his father. And I still haven't found my dad. But I have been able to find clues to lead me to him. The DTS card in the butler's room said Dad was in a room in the back. And the message that was on the white notepad had a name on it. The name was . . .

A Bill

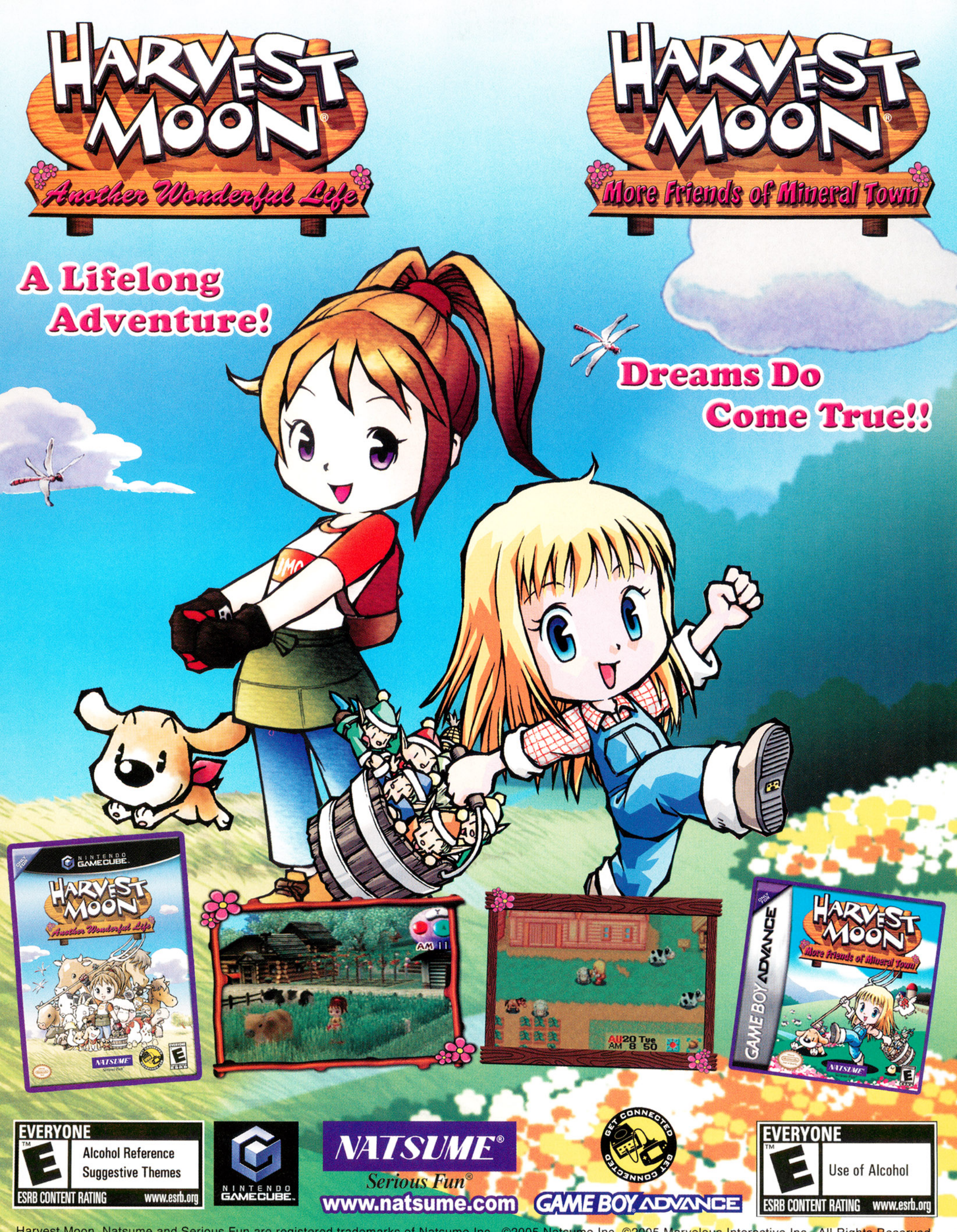
Q Before finding the hidden door in the music room, I encountered a puzzle in the white books. I solved the puzzle by finding three books. One book had a Y on the spine, another book had an N and the third book had an . . .

A E

DTS Checklist

Among the items you'll find in the mansion are DTS journal entries left by Ashley's father.

1. Part of an Essay: Find it on the floor of the music room.
2. DTS Card #902: Inspect the display case to the right of the books in the music room.
3. DTS Card #901: Look in the right drawer above the surface of the butler's desk.
4. DTS Card #01: Look on the desk in the butler's room, next to the notepad.
5. Charcoal: Look in the fireplace in the butler's room.
6. Book with the Y: Look on the bookshelf in the butler's room.
7. Silver Medal: Complete the puzzle in the rightmost wardrobe of the butler's room.
8. Sprout Key: Place the silver medal in the bird statue in the foyer.
9. Book with the E: Inspect the bookcase in the Golden Bird room.
10. Second Sprout Key: Find it in the glass in the cabinet of the Golden Bird room.
11. Book with the N: Search the bookcase in the Silver Bird room.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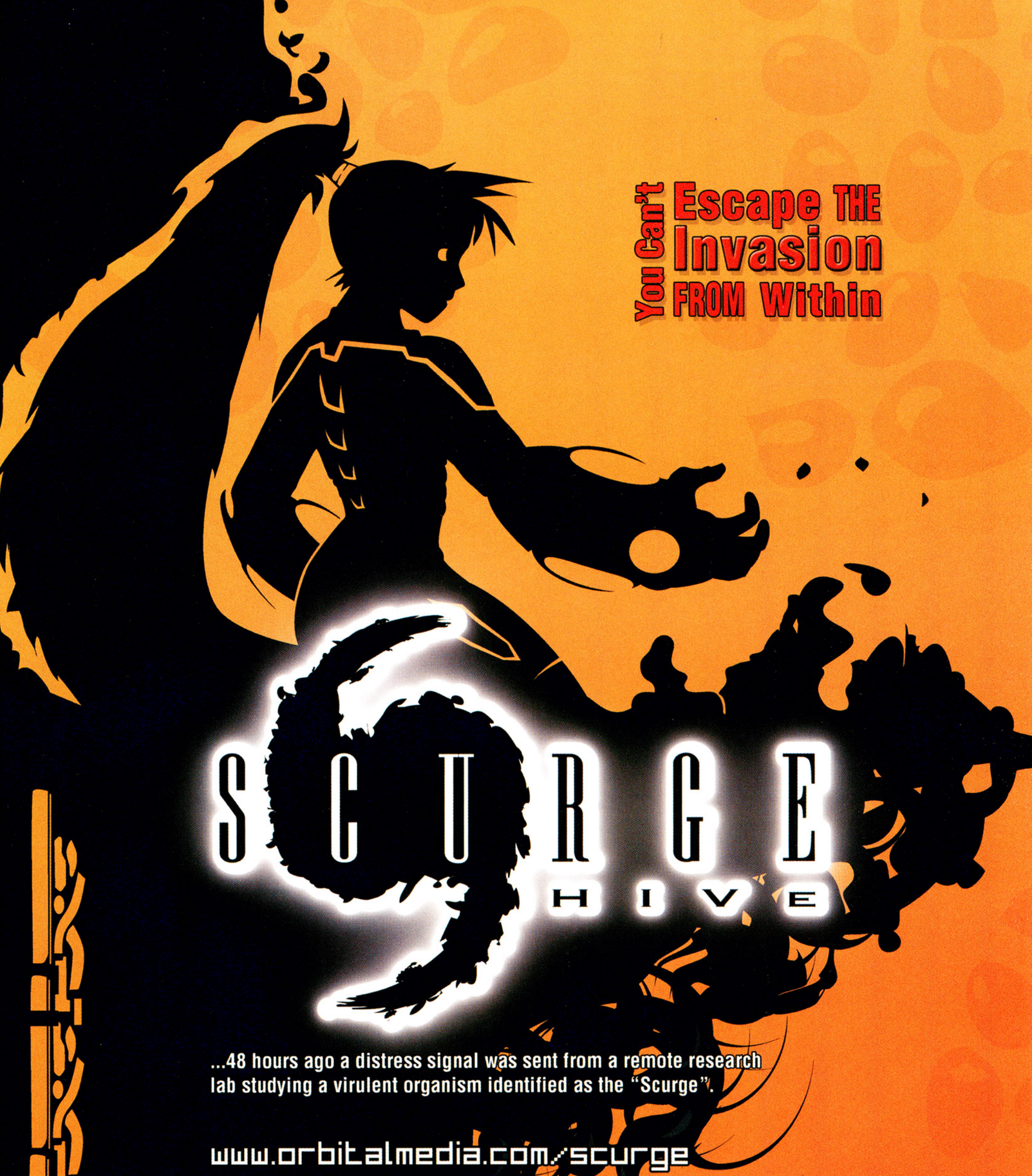
You Can't Escape THE Invasion FROM Within
SCURGE
HIVE

...48 hours ago a distress signal was sent from a remote research lab studying a virulent organism identified as the "Scurge".

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ORBITAL MEDIA

EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
Fantasy Violence
Animated Blood
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

GAME BOY ADVANCE SP
NINTENDO DS™

Jenosa Arma. First rate bounty hunter…probably the best. I've been hired to investigate a remote research lab on the planet Enos that is studying a virulent organism identified as the "Scurge."

48 hours ago my employers received a distress signal.

I've seen this sort of thing before. It's typical that these "impossible" missions require a girl of my talents because the company doesn't want to risk their own employees. Instead, they send an outsider like me.

Word is they have some real state-of-the-art gear for me to take along. A new biometric suit that is a combination of environmental and body armor fully equipped with this strange new weapons system. All of it is supposedly upgradeable, but it seems all the upgrades are on that planet. It's well above the standard machinery I usually employ and I'm looking forward to getting my hands on it.

There's something wrong with this guy, though. He's sweaty and nervous and he avoids my questions like the plague. I did manage to get him to talk a little. And then I'm ready to walk when he tells me this is a military lab! But he shows me how much he's gonna pay and I have to accept. A girls gotta make a living and really…how bad could it be?

SCURGE HIVE

DEAD OF THE DAWN

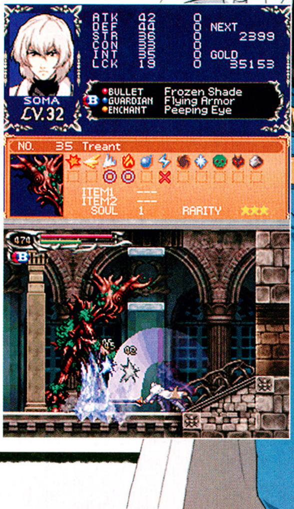
The bosses of Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow will put Soma to the ultimate test!

By Chris Shepperd

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

© 2005 Konami

One year has passed since Soma Cruz entered Dracula's castle and learned his true identity—the reincarnation of Dracula himself. Now a new danger confronts him: cult leader Celia Fortner plans to turn Soma into the evil demon that he has the potential to be. To thwart Celia's terrible plans, Soma must penetrate the monster-filled hideout of Celia's cult and face her most fearsome henchmen.



```
ATK   42      0
DEF   44      0  NEXT
STR   36      0       2399
CON   33      0
INT   35      0  GOLD
LCK   19      0      35153

SOMA
LV.32

BULLET    Frozen Shade
GUARDIAN  Flying Armor
ENCHANT   Peeping Eye

NO.   35 Treant
ITEM1   ---
ITEM2   ---
SOUL    1      RARITY ★★★
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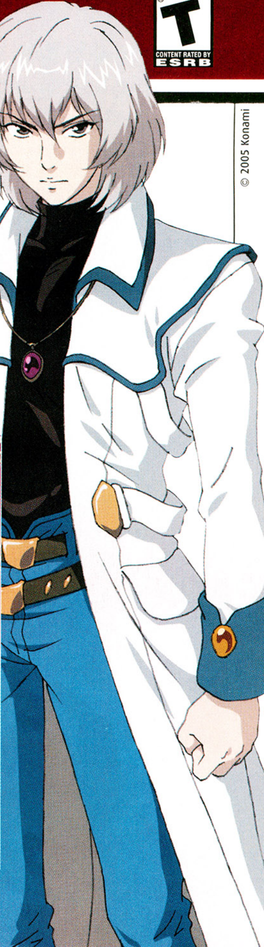
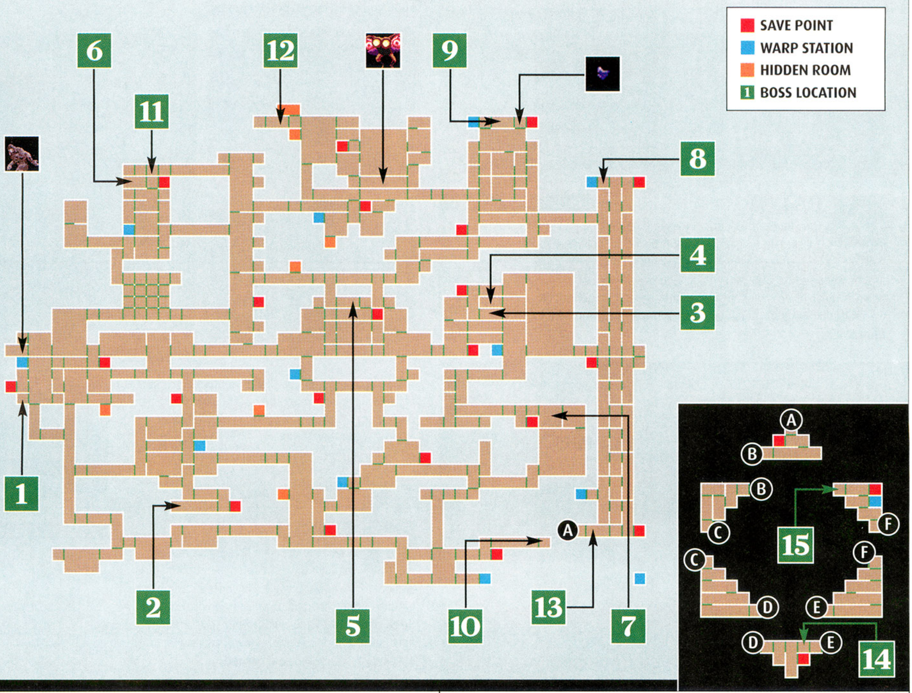


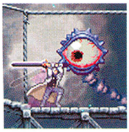
Chart Your Course

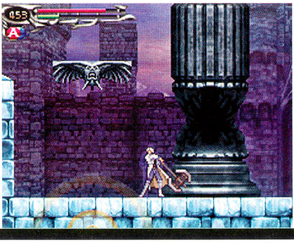
The headquarters of Celia's cult is enormous; thankfully, the DS's top screen will relieve you of having to switch back and forth between map and gameplay incessantly. Save points heal your strength and magic fully—always know how close you are to the nearest one in case you have to make a hasty retreat. Warp stations all over the base will help you get around quickly. Break through walls to find hidden rooms throughout the complex, as well. It is possible to fight some of the bosses in a different order from the one we're showing, but you could run into trouble if you veer off the suggested order.



Eyes on the Prize

Even from the very start of the game, it is important to be on the lookout for creatures who will give up valuable souls. One of the most useful souls you can acquire is that of the Peeping Eye, one of the first enemies you will encounter. When you equip the monster's soul, breakable walls will pulse yellow, indicating the locations of treasure-filled secret rooms.

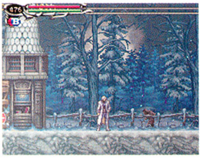




● Bullet Soul
● Guardian Soul
● Enchant Soul

Read All about It!

Three of the souls are very difficult to find—clues within the UMA News articles that Hammer sells help to reveal their locations. The effects of the Yeti and Flying Humanoid souls aren't particularly useful, but Mothman's soul will help you level up your character significantly.



Exclusive Scoop!

Use the Waiter Skeleton soul to lure the Yeti over the fence, then hack at him before he can retreat back into the woods.

Terror Alert!

Between two Great Armors sits a giant spotlight. Zap the nearby generator box with the Rycuda soul to draw Mothman into the open.

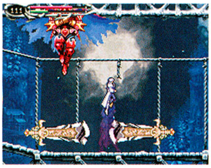
Up in the Sky!

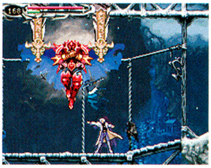
You can see the Flying Humanoid circling a distant spire. Use the Mandragora soul to attack him where he flies.

1 FLYING ARMOR

You won't have many souls to choose from when facing the Flying Armor. Be sure to collect the Axe Armor's soul before facing the sword-tossing menace—the high arc on the axes you toss can still hit the winged creature when it flies up high. **The Flying Armor soul will allow you to descend slowly from jumps.**

RECOMMENDED SOULS
- 🔴 Axe Armor
- 🔵 Bat
- 🟠 Golem

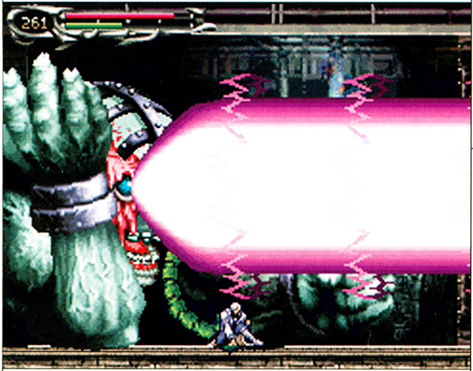




2 BALORE

The Slime soul is perfect for the cramped quarters of Balore's lair. Bounce slime balls off Balore—after they hit, they'll ricochet off the nearby walls and damage him again. Keep your head down as much as possible during the battle—the giant's blast comes with little warning and does a ton of damage. **With the Balore soul, you can break blue blocks.**

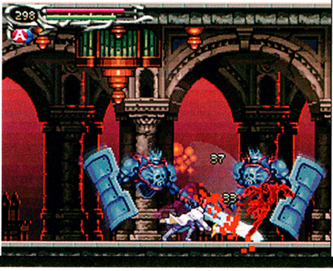
RECOMMENDED SOULS
- 🔴 Slime
- 🔵 Mantacore
- 🟠 Golem



3 DMITRII

Celia's underling Dmitrii has learned how to copy your soul attacks, and will use your powers against you. Equip an easily avoidable soul like the Axe Armor to make it harder for him to damage you. Dmitrii will also copy your Guardian soul power, but since he does not use physical attacks, familiars he summons will not strike. **No soul earned.**

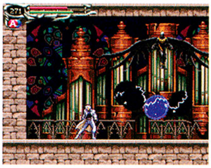
RECOMMENDED SOULS
- 🔴 Axe Armor
- 🔵 Great Armor
- 🟠 Golem

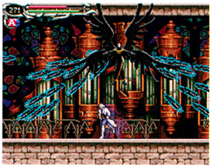


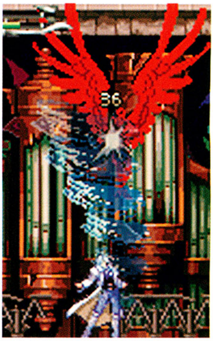
4 MALPHAS

The giant birdlike Malphas tends to stay in one place and will execute an array of attacks. The feathers it shoots are hard to avoid but weak; stay away from the more-powerful ball of energy it fires occasionally. When Malphas is low enough to reach, toss Mandragoras at the beast to do incredible damage. If the boss flies up high, create a lethal tornado under it with the Spin Devil soul. **With the Malphas soul, you can execute double jumps.**

RECOMMENDED SOULS
- 🔴 Mandragora
- 🔵 Spin Devil
- 🟠 Treant





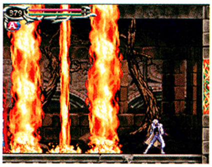


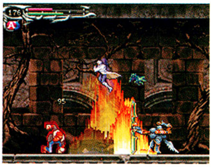
The Double Jump ability allows you to reach higher places. Check your map and backtrack to points you couldn't get to previously—they will often bear items . . . and new perils.

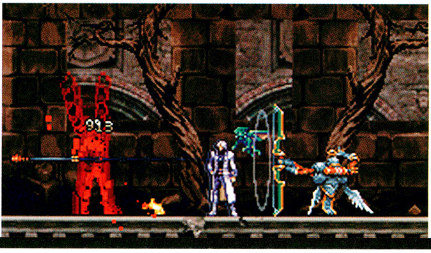
5 DARIO

Dario's long-range fire attacks make it difficult to get near him. Set up Amalaric Snipers to fire at Dario while you concentrate on not getting burned. The Mini Devil can also provide a little bit of firepower and will continue to attack Dario even when you're not near him. Pay attention to Dario's movements—what he does before his attack will indicate it's nature. **No soul earned.**

RECOMMENDED SOULS
- 🔴 Amalaric Sniper
- 🔵 Mini Devil
- 🟠 Treant







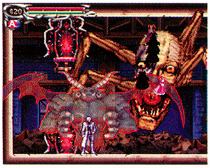
6

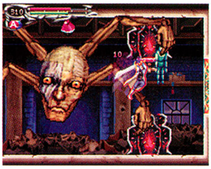
PUPPET MASTER

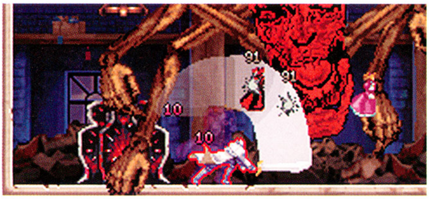
RECOMMENDED SOULS

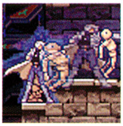
- ● Rycuda
- ● Devil
- ● Golem

The Puppet Master sends out ghostly pink dancers—use the Rycuda soul to zap them all at once. The long-armed boss does most of its damage when it shuts a suit of armor in one of the four spiked cages—it damages you like a voodoo doll. Power up your strength with the Devil soul and strike the armor before the monster has time to crush it. **The Puppet Master soul allows you to toss a puppet and swap places with it.**









Use the Puppet Master soul's ability to pass through narrow gaps in walls. If you toss the puppet through the opening, you will exchange places with it automatically.

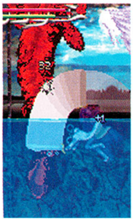
7

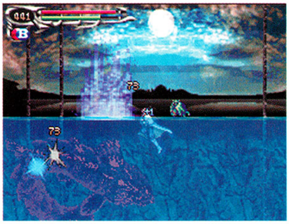
RAHAB

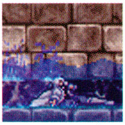
RECOMMENDED SOULS

- ● Witch
- ● Mini Devil
- ● The Creature

It's almost impossible to hit Rahab until it breaches the surface of the subterranean pool. Use the Witch soul to home in on the beast when it surfaces. The Mini Devil will continue to fire shots at Rahab while the monster is underwater. Rahab spends a lot of time deep below, leaving you in relative safety and giving The Creature soul's slow regenerative ability time to heal you between attacks. **Once you collect Rahab's soul, you can move underwater.**







With Rahab's soul, you can swim underwater. You will naturally sink to the bottom—to swim higher, press the jump button repeatedly. Initially you will move slowly underwater—collect the Procne soul to move faster while submerged.

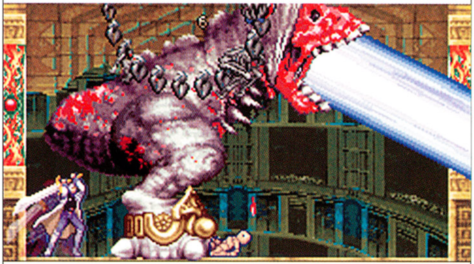
8

GERGOTH

RECOMMENDED SOULS

- ● Puppet Master
- ● Quetzalcoatl
- ● Golem

When the hulking Gergoth is about to use its most powerful attack, a giant laser, use the Puppet Master soul to get behind the enemy's legs and hack its body. It'll turn around, so watch out. Use the Quetzalcoatl soul, as well—Gergoth is so big that the bony familiar will hit it almost constantly. **Gergoth's soul causes a giant laser-beam attack.**



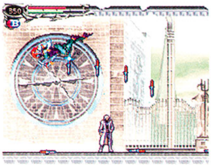
9

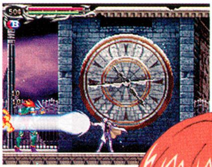
ZEPHYR

RECOMMENDED SOULS

- ● Hell Boar
- ● Gergoth
- ● The Creature

Because of his amazing speed, it's nearly unavoidable to take a lot of damage from Zephyr. When the boss is within striking distance, use the uppercut punches of the Hell Boar soul to inflict a ton of damage. Equip the recently acquired Gergoth soul to hit Zephyr when he jumps away. **The Zephyr soul grants you the ability to stop time.**





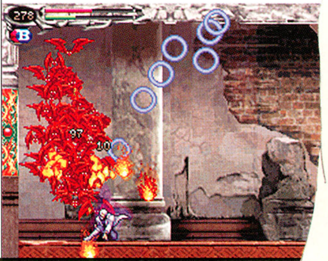
10

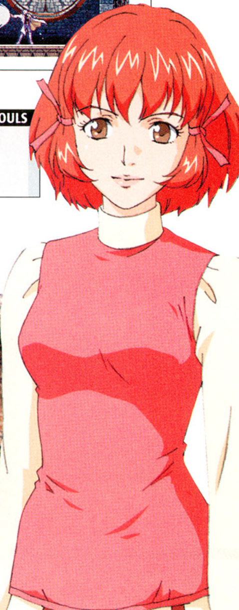
BAT COMPANY

RECOMMENDED SOULS

- ● Ukoback
- ● Buer
- ● The Creature

Fire attacks work best against the Bat Company—use the Ukoback soul to torch the red swarm. Turn on the Buer soul to create a ring of fire around you. The Bat Company is susceptible to damage only when it coalesces into a shape, so save your magic energy until then. **Turn into a bat and fly by using the Bat Company soul.**



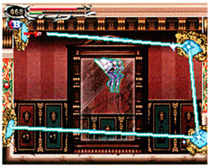


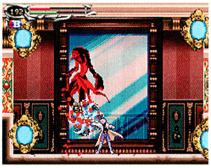
11 PARANOIA

RECOMMENDED SOULS

- 🔴 Disc Armor
- 🔵 Medusa Head
- 🟠 Treant

Paranoia doesn't move around much, so a powerful short-range attack like the Disc Armor soul's can be very effective. Use the Medusa Head soul to hover in one spot and avoid getting hit when the mirrors deflect the lasers. The Medusa Head soul consumes a lot of magic—keep the Treant soul equipped to improve your magic-recovery rate. **With the Paranoia soul, you can enter mirrors.**



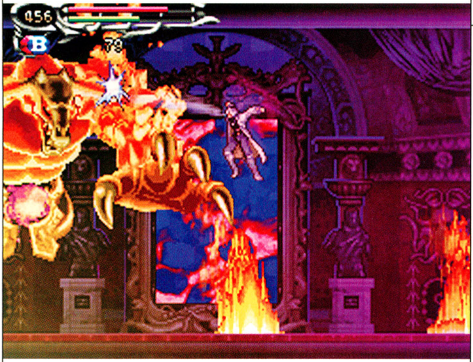


12 AGUNI

RECOMMENDED SOULS

- 🔴 Merman
- 🔵 Alastor
- 🟠 Treant

Instead of fighting Dario, use the Paranoia soul to enter the mirror and fight the demon possessing him. Aguni is weak against water attacks—use the Merman soul to cause massive damage. Remember; the more Merman souls you've collected, the greater damage you will cause. **Aguni's soul causes a ground-based fire attack.**

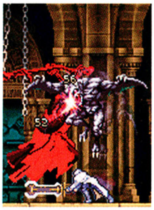


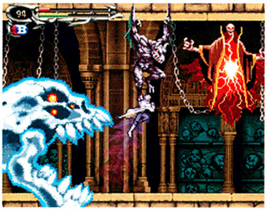
13 DEATH

RECOMMENDED SOULS

- 🔴 Slogra
- 🔵 Gaibon
- 🟠 Treant

The Gaibon soul summons one of the most powerful familiars in the game. Use it to wear down Death. Well-placed spears from the Slogra soul can hit Death multiple times in one pass. Be careful of the giant skulls the reaper conjures—one misstep in avoiding them can mean disaster. **Throw miniature scythes using the Death soul.**



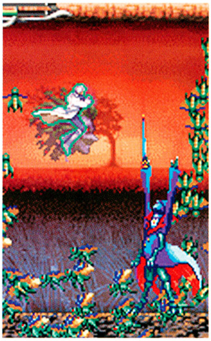


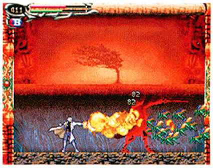
14 ABADDON

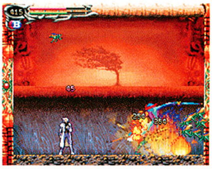
RECOMMENDED SOULS

- 🔴 Flame Demon
- 🔵 Death
- 🟠 Dead Pirate

The Death soul's scythes will thin the field of locusts that Abaddon calls forth, occasionally preventing you from being hit. The sorceror waves his hand to indicate the direction of the next locust wave, giving you time to find a safe place to hide. You could also use the Medusa Head soul to hover and avoid the locusts, but Death's scythes have the added advantage of doing damage in between the swarming attacks. **Abaddon's soul summons a cloud of locusts.**





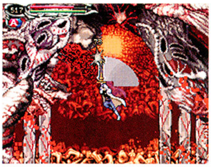


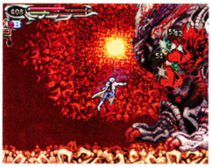
15 MENACE

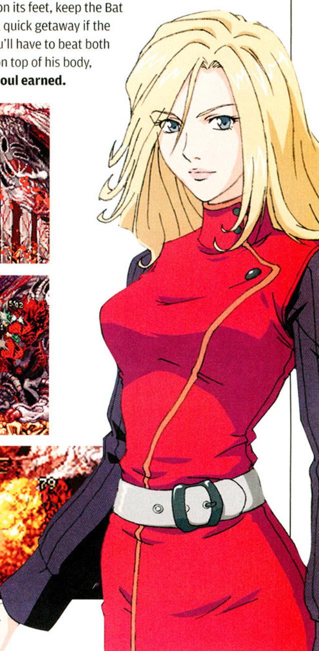
RECOMMENDED SOULS

- 🔴 Flame Demon
- 🔵 Bat Company
- 🟠 Golem

Have patience during the first half of the battle—the Menace's first round of attacks are easy to dodge. Avoid using soul abilities during the first part, as well, because you'll want to save your magic for when the giant skeleton stands upright. Once the Menace is on its feet, keep the Bat Company soul equipped for a quick getaway if the monster comes too close. You'll have to beat both of the Menace's heads—one on top of his body, and one on his kneecap. **No soul earned.**







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EVERYONE
E
Cartoon Violence
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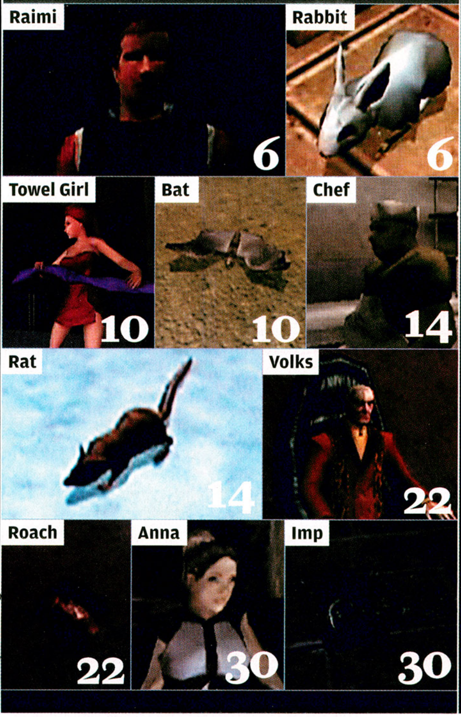
TOTAL SHOCKER!

>GEIST

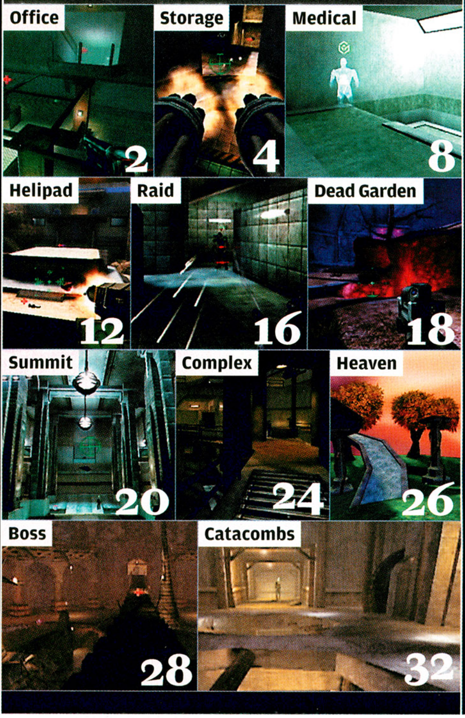
So you've finished Geist's single-player mode, but you're still far from done. Remember those collectibles you found as a host? Well, there are 32 of those! The following chart shows what unlocks when you find enough of 'em.

Characters



Character	Collectibles
Raimi	6
Rabbit	6
Towel Girl	10
Bat	10
Chef	14
Rat	14
Volks	22
Roach	22
Anna	30
Imp	30

Multiplayer Levels



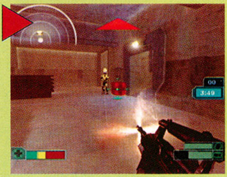
Level	Collectibles
Office	2
Storage	4
Medical	8
Helipad	12
Raid	16
Dead Garden	18
Summit	20
Complex	24
Heaven	26
Boss	28
Catacombs	32

Supernatural Abilities

Tired of getting repossessed? Some of the testers who lived and breathed Geist multiplayer during the game's development showed us six ways to prove you've got soul. Their motto? Keep Host Alive!

SHOCK AND AWESOME

Explosions can cause a ridiculous amount of damage to a host. Whenever possible, possess a rocket, grenade or mine soldier, then try to plant a red flower between the eyes of your opponent. If a standard gun is all you have, pay attention to the location of the explosive crates lying around the levels. When an enemy is standing near one, take him down with a few well-placed shots to a crate.



HOUSE OF PAIN

Jumping around is your best defense when you're being pursued by a host with any type of weapon (especially ones mentioned in the tip to the left. Sporadic movements and off-timed leaps can fool your opponent into firing where you're not. Keep in mind, though, that stray explosions can hurt you even through the floors, walls and ceilings. Lame.

ALTERNATIVE REMEDIES

Many of the weapons in Geist have an alternate firing option (assigned to the Z Button), that can equate to more damage per shot. For example, a point-blank shotgun round alone can't take an opponent down, but the alternate discharge can; it unloads two rounds at once but takes longer to fire. The most useful alternate shot belongs to the flamethrower—it can deliver a one-hit-kill fireball from all the way across the level.

QUALITY VS. QUANTITY

When firing the standard machine gun, try not to be trigger-happy. Pressing the R Button rapidly rather than holding it down will give you much better accuracy. However, this is true only with the machine gun.

POSSESSION IS NINE-TENTHS OF THE LAW

If you have impeccable speed and a steady hand, it's possible to possess a rocket right out of thin air. You can fly it for as long as you like—provided you don't run into anything. Once you've had your fun, you can dispossess it. It will continue in the direction you chose, and if it hits someone, you'll get the kill!

OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCE

Let's be honest; sometimes while playing split-screened multiplayer games, a good strategy is to watch other screens. I've done it, you've done it—we're not proud, but it's a necessary evil. If you happen to spot a fellow player in ghost form, he's probably looking for a powerful soldier to jump in. If the player happens to be in your vicinity, take out all possible hosts around you, or you could find yourself on the receiving end of a grenade. Ouch.

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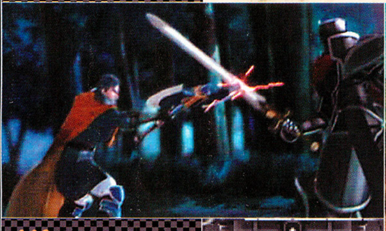
REVIEWS

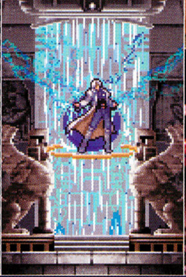
In-depth reviews of the latest games

We choose Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness for this month's spotlight review. Does it shine?



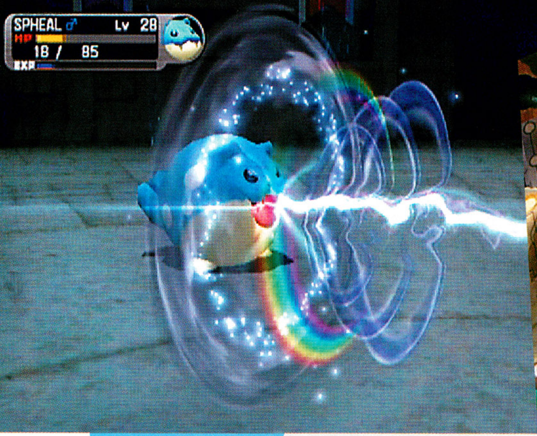
+ Battalion Wars, Trace Memory and more.

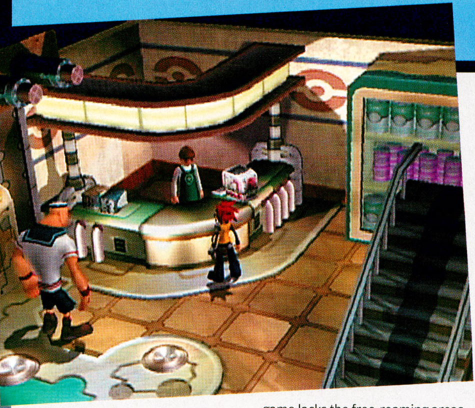
110
To call Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance an epic is an understatement.



106
Perfect or Imperfect? We mix it up with Marvel Nemesis.

104
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow elevates 2-D action to a new level on the Nintendo DS.





I'M JUST A SNAG MACHINE

QUITE A CATCH

POKéMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Pokémon haters, and you know who you are, I've got news for you. You're missing out on a great game. I can understand if you're not a big fan of the cartoon, or if you're not exactly rushing out to get the next Trading Card Game booster pack, but if you consider yourself a gamer, you really should play this game. The intriguing story and challenging gameplay are enough to please any RPG gamer, and in-game tutorials make it so you don't need to be a master Trainer to be able to pick up XD and enjoy it right away.

Visually, Pokémon XD goes way beyond expectation. The environments look crisp and detailed, complete with added light and reflection effects. Even areas that were also in Pokémon Colosseum, such as Pyrite Town and Realgam Tower, look nicer than they did the first time around. And during battles, the new attacks look amazing—the special effects from added Shadow Pokémon moves are particularly incredible. The lack of a moveable camera, both in battle and while exploring, is slightly disappointing, but thankfully never becomes a hindrance to gameplay.

Pokémon XD's story mode is as solid as that of any Pokémon game to date. The adventure centers on a criminal organization called Cipher, which is trying to subvert Pokémon and make them perform evil deeds. Through a series of minor incidents, the main character is rather unwittingly pulled into confronting the crime syndicate head-on. Because the character appears older than in previous Pokémon games, his adventure seems more plausible. The story is told artfully through conversation and hearsay, and you seldom feel like the game is being overly explicit to cater to the youngest of gamers. The dialogue is also wittier than the usual Pokémon game—running jokes and humorous cutscenes lend the title a lot of levity. A group of bad guys called the Hexagon Brothers supplies especially funny moments several times throughout the adventure.

There's been a lot of disagreement in the Pokémon world about the value of Shadow Pokémon. The addition of new Shadow Moves makes them much more versatile and powerful, and improves their reputation within the Pokémon community. True, you sometimes feel like they're breaking up the delicate balance that makes the Pokémon battle system as good as it is, but at least they are now more fun to use.

Although the story mode is very solid, sometimes the pace of the story breaks down. Level-building is an arduous task, and without the benefit of plentiful wild Pokémon to help your Pokémon gain levels, you frequently have to engage in long, drawn-out battles with random Trainers. The Trainers are really tough, as well—after virtually every battle, you have to return to a Pokémon Healing Machine and rejuvenate your team. When the nearest Healing Machine is in another town, you're in for a lot of needless traveling.

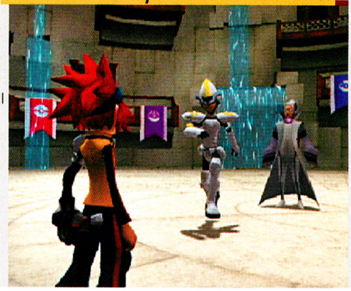
The concept behind the Purify Chamber, the new device for cleansing Shadow Pokémon, fits well into the story, and the chamber's ability to purify a lot of Pokémon at once does speed up gameplay. But the process is overly complicated—you can mess with the Purify Chamber for a long time and still not fully understand how it works.

In the end, XD is not quite the adventure that Pokémon fans have been clamoring for. The game lacks the free-roaming areas to catch Pokémon, and the routes between the different locations that give other Pokémon games such a connected feel. XD also reuses a lot of the locations from Pokémon Colosseum, and even though they look better than they did, veterans of the first GCN offering will be disappointed with the lack of new areas to explore. It would also have been nice to see and, more importantly, be able to play more new Pokémon.

Outside of the story mode though, the game still has a lot of value. With the phenomenal graphics and custom rule sets, XD provides a perfect environment for battling friends. It's a little bit of a let down that, just like in Colosseum, you have to beat the story mode before you can import Pokémon from the GBA Pokémon games. Fortunately, the story mode is fun enough that it's worth the wait.

—CHRIS S.

From sleek track pants to full-body armor, Pokémarts carry all the hot fashions.



WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE POKéMON-THEMED GAME?

The release of Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness has inspired us to look at the phenomenon as a whole. Here our writers comment on their Pokémon faves.

STEVEN GRIMM

Pokémon Snap. It's the closest that we've gotten to roaming a 3-D classic-Pokémon world, plus the gameplay feeds my infatuation with camera games.

CHRIS SHEPPERD

Gimme Pokémon Puzzle League any day. It's not exactly a Pokémon game, but the taunts of the Pokémon always crack me up.

ANDY MYERS

I have to give a shout-out to the Japanese-only title Pokémon Shock Tetris for the Pokémon Mini hardware—easily the funnest Tetris game ever made.

GEORGE SINFIELD

Let me give a shout-out to Squirtle, the coolest amphibian since Frogger. As for games, I'll stand by Stadium, the first game in which Pokémon battled in 3-D glory.

STEVE THOMASON

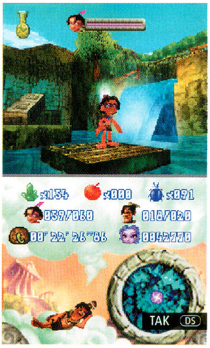
I like Snap, I guess.

PETE MICHAUD

As a huge fan of the Smash Bros., I love the fact that Pokémon make an appearance in SSBM. They've made for some of my most memorable Melee moments.

SCOTT PELLAND

XD is it. Combine memorable characters with the best battle engine and graphics of any Pokémon game, and you've got a winner.

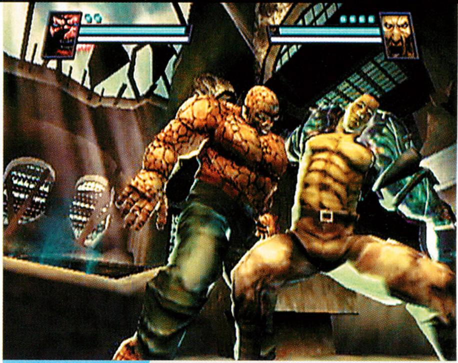


TAK: THE GREAT JUJU CHALLENGE

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: ALTRON
ESRB: EVERYONE

It's refreshing to see a game that's released for the GCN, GBA and DS designed uniquely for each platform. The DS version has the distinction of being the first 3-D platformer created specifically for the system. Each level is well-crafted, and the graphics are as beautiful as any we've seen on the handheld so far. (But sadly, the DS version misses out on the talented voice acting that makes the GCN version so special.) Tak is probably the easiest-to-control 3-D DS title yet, perhaps because it was never intended to be played with an analog stick–the result is that the dozens of jumping puzzles are easier to navigate. The camera is well-implemented, too; you can adjust it on the fly with the L and R Buttons, but to move it up and down you employ the stylus, which leads to some interesting moments (read: frustration) when engaging enemies. There's a surprisingly deep power-up menu as well, but it's overkill for the game's target audience. In between most stages you must complete a minigame (usually involving the mic or the touch screen) to progress farther into the story. The minigames are an interesting afterthought, but they mostly feel unpolished and out of place with the rest of the game. —PETE M.



NEEDS MORE SUPER

HEROES VS. ZEROS

MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
ESRB: TEEN

What does Def Jam have to do with Marvel Nemesis? Like EA's hip-hop series, this game aims to be more than a fighter, letting gamers live the lives of their idols. EA's second Def Jam effort, lifestyle brawler Fight for NY, was a quantum leap from the first game. Although hard-core fighter fans wanted more complexity and didn't get the lifestyle stuff, hip-hop fans must have thought they'd died and gone to Def Jam heaven.

Hopefully EA will make similar advancements with a future follow-up to Marvel Nemesis, which has a similarly easy-to-play combat system but skimps on details that would make it a rich superhero experience. The Marvel roster is a good cross-section, and you'll surely find a few faves in the bunch: Storm, Wolverine, Magneto, the Thing, Human Torch, Iron Man, Spider-Man, Venom, Daredevil and Elektra. Each has strengths and tradeoffs: the Thing is a tank but easily hit; Human Torch is a fleet flier but easily snuffed; and Iron Man has titanic attributes across the board plus a devastating laser superattack, but it's hard to build up his rage meter, which fuels extended superattack usage. Sadly, none of the Marvelness is vivid: only two of the too-few arenas are Marvel-specific, and even those are generic; entry and finishing lines are repetitive and often bland ("I am Iron Man!"); and the plot of the story mode, a useful and extremely long tutorial, is threadbare.

Far more lavish is the treatment given the Imperfects, the other eight supercombatants that EA and Marvel created for the game. They have better lines, interesting origins told through good cinema scenes, and character design that's beautifully tied to gameplay. Cowled assassin The Wink, for example, who had a tragic childhood that saw her face burned by acid, teleports onto the field saying in a thick Eastern Euro-accent, "Do you believe in magic?," then runs around with an impossibly long blood-red scarf trailing her acrobatic moves.

Like in many fighters, the two-player Versus mode is where Marvel Nemesis fares best, especially when you're battling a second player who appreciates pick-up-and-play simplicity. And if you face off against a Marvel-minded friend, you'll find it even better, since the both of you can improvise the much-needed Marvel-flavored color commentary and trash talking. 'Nuff said. —STEVEN G.

BATS IN THE BELFRY

SUCH SWEET SORROW

CASTLEVANIA: DAWN OF SORROW

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **KONAMI**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Few game franchises are as revered as Castlevania, and its legion of fans always expects great things. Rest assured; Dawn of Sorrow for DS delivers. The same quality visuals, gameplay and story that have made this series one of the best ever continue to amaze even the most jaded gamers.

Dawn of Sorrow takes place in and around Dracula's castle, a decrepit place full of monsters, traps and riches. Soma Cruz, the main character from the GBA title Aria of Sorrow, returns, and he must confront a new evil, as well as his own dark history. Soma's ability to capture the souls of the monsters he has slain is once again the basis for the game's magic system. Each soul provides a unique skill, such as a special attack or the ability to summon a monster to Soma's aid. (Unfortunately, soul-collecting is the one gameplay aspect that gets tiresome. You'll sometimes have to fight a particular enemy 50 times or more to collect its soul, which means a lot of redundant action. It's not a terrible problem, but it does draw out the game unnecessarily.)

As with the trio of GBA games and Symphony of the Night for PlayStation, Dawn of Sorrow takes 2-D graphics above and beyond all other titles of its kind. The developers have a knack for drawing out the absolute best in whatever system they're designing for. The layered parallax backgrounds are breathtaking, particularly in outdoor areas such as the village and the garden. And many of the background features, such as distant buildings and towers, are rendered in 3-D, making the backgrounds even more dazzling. The variety of locations is impressive—from the dank underground caverns to the creepy attic playrooms, graphical nuances demonstrate a kind of care that is rarely seen in other series, except possibly The Legend of Zelda. The enemies are amazing, as well—each monster's level of detail is unparalleled. And to augment the beautiful graphics, every area has unique music that sets the mood perfectly.

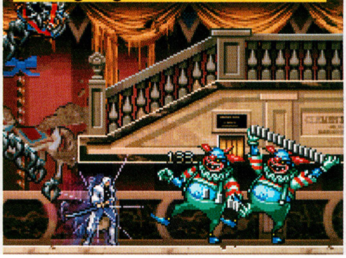
If the graphics and sound aren't engrossing enough to draw you in, the intriguing story and exhilarating action should be. Veterans of the franchise will enjoy the expansion on previous story arcs, while players new to the series will appreciate the in-game histories of all the key actors.

Furthermore, several excellent features extend beyond the main story. In Boss Rush mode, for example, you must battle every boss in the game consecutively, using the weapons and souls you've collected from the main story. In Enemy Set mode, you get to design your own challenge—place monsters in a series of chambers, then challenge your friends to complete your custom-made gauntlet in record time (or play it by yourself). Additionally, some secret modes open once you've completed the main story, much like in the GBA games. All of these features add an incredible amount of fun gameplay to an already long main game.

It's interesting that one of the best games so far for the DS utilizes very few of the system's unique features. Touch-screen control and wireless connectivity are relatively minor aspects of the game, and they feel tacked on, adding very little to the overall experience. Moreover, some of the touch-screen elements work far better for right-handed players, something that gave this lefty fits. However, the upper screen makes a huge difference to gameplay. The persistent map is far from glamorous—the simple block grid looks shockingly bare in contrast to the lush, realistic graphics of the main game—but it is so valuable that you forget what it was like to have to pause to see it in previous games. The complexity and size of the castle and its environs would be very frustrating if not for the map. The upper screen also provides handy real-time information about your character's status and your enemies' strengths and weaknesses, but the developers' specific choices about which information to put there are questionable. For example, you can tell by Soma's aura that he has been afflicted with some nasty effect, but you have to pause the game to see precisely what ails him. This and similar data would have been great on the upper screen. In general, though, the game loses little value by not utilizing *all* of the DS's specialties, and it gains an incredible amount by adequately employing the second screen.

Each new Castlevania game is a step closer to perfection. You get the feeling that the developers are using the franchise to hone in on what they consider the ideal gaming experience. As a result, most of the series's games have a very similar feeling. Dawn of Sorrow continues the tradition—the enemies, magic system and main characters are all very much like those in Aria of Sorrow for the Game Boy Advance. But this sameness shouldn't be frowned upon—Castlevania's design is about as good as it comes. It's a shame more developers aren't looking to this series as inspiration for their own games instead of aping boring, redundant platformers.

—**CHRIS S.**



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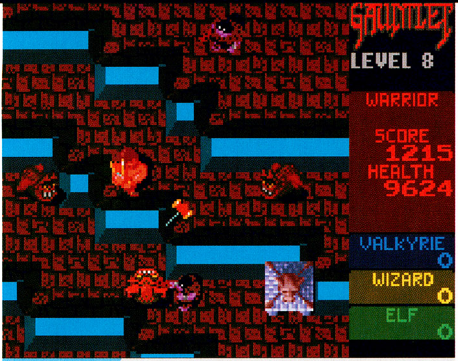

A PACK OF PAKS

GROUP DYNAMICS

DESTINATION COMPILATIONS

CENTIPEDE COMPILATION: 5.0
CONNECT FOUR COMPILATION: 5.0
GAUNTLET COMPILATION: 6.5
KLAX COMPILATION: 4.0
MILLIPEDE COMPILATION: 5.0
PAPERBOY COMPILATION: 5.5
PONG COMPILATION: 5.5
RISK COMPILATION: 7.0
SCRABBLE JR. COMPILATION: 4.5
SPY HUNTER COMPILATION: 4.5

PLATFORM: **GAME BOY ADVANCE**
PUBLISHER: **DESTINATION**
DEVELOPER: **VARIOUS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Classic arcade and board games get retro-revival treatment in 10 Compilation titles. Risk Compilation (developed by Gravity~i), which features Risk, Battleship and Clue, is the standout. Though the pak's version of Risk is built for a single player, the AI opponents are suitably adept at world-conquering and will offer even a Risk expert a long, tough play. For fans of simpler board games, there's Connect Four Compilation—a grouping of Connect Four, Perfection and Trouble—and Scrabble Jr. Compilation (both also from Gravity~i). The latter gives you Sorry and Aggravation in addition to a simplified-scoring version of Scrabble. Though the title game of each pak is well-made, they are weak headliners when compared to Risk.

Among the arcade titles, Gauntlet Compilation (ec-i), which features Gauntlet and Rampart, is as good as they get. Gauntlet is, unfortunately, a single-player game on this pak, but you do have your choice of all four classic characters and the game includes the original computer-voice samples. The phrase "Warrior needs food" should give any old-school gamer chills. Rampart is an overlooked strategy classic. Pong Compilation (ec-i) has Pong, Asteroids and Yars' Revenge. Centipede Compilation (ec-i) presents Centipede and two paddle-oriented games: Breakout and Warlords. Millipede Compilation (Gravity~i) features Millipede, Super Breakout and Lunar Lander. Spy Hunter Compilation (Black Lantern) includes the original Spy Hunter (though without the Peter Gunn theme) and Super Sprint, an overhead racer that pales in comparison to Orbital Media's Racing Gears Advance. Rounding out the collection are KLAX Compilation (developed by Frame Studios and featuring KLAX and Marble Madness) and Paperboy Compilation (also developed by Frame Studios, and featuring Paperboy and Rampage). Larger compilations would have been better values, but if you're a big fan of one or two titles on a pak, it's worth your consideration.
—**GEORGE S.**

WWE GCN

FIFA SOCCER 06 GCN

WWE: DAY OF RECKONING 2

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **YUKE'S**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Day of Reckoning 2 boasts a number of improvements over its predecessor. The character models rank among the best ever seen on the GCN (in any game), and the polygonal crowds look much better than the 2-D cutouts from previous wrestling titles. In story mode, each wrestler's dialogue more accurately portrays his real-life persona (though there's still no voice acting, unfortunately), and the overall presentation does a better job of re-creating what you see on a WWE broadcast. Rivals confront each other on The Highlight Reel, Triple H and Ric Flair style and profile in expensive suits during promos, and so on. The only downside to the year-long campaign is that the big "mystery" angle is fairly ridiculous and drags on far too long. As for the in-ring action, the most significant addition was supposed to be the stamina system. However, Yuke's has toned it down so much from the preview versions I played (in which you had to apply frequent rest holds to keep your grappler fresh), that it's now rarely a factor in any of my matches. As a result, contests unfold much like they did in last year's game. Nevertheless, this is the best WWE title on the GCN to date. —**STEVE T.**

FIFA SOCCER 06

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA CANADA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

No sports series creates atmosphere as well as EA's FIFA Soccer series. It's no wonder. The developers have decades of tradition to work from—hundreds of teams, thousands of players and millions of fans. With the 2006 edition, the series ratchets up your connection to the world of soccer a few notches by bombarding you with images of great moments, enthusiastic radio calls and game-immersing options. Single-player Management mode is the series's most ambitious season simulation to date. As a free-agent team manager, you float from club to club working for bigger opportunities. Sponsors, ownership groups and prima donna players put you in situations that you have to deal with diplomatically. The complex menu system provides access to lots of information and management decisions, but some of the most important details, such as your team's current standings, tend to get buried. The multiplayer FIFA 06 Lounge setup allows up to eight players to create a league and save their progress on a Memory Card. It's a simple idea that will undoubtedly catch on with other sports games. Onfield play is similar to that of previous FIFA Soccer iterations, which is to say that it is easy to plug and play, but difficult to master, especially when it comes to scoring. Player animation is natural, but there is a slight delay on some kicks—and if you press the button several times out of frustration, you may trigger an unintended passing relay that, more times than not, results in a loss of possession. Attacking and formation options require time to appreciate, but the game's overall look, feel and flow make it time well spent.
—**GEORGE S.**

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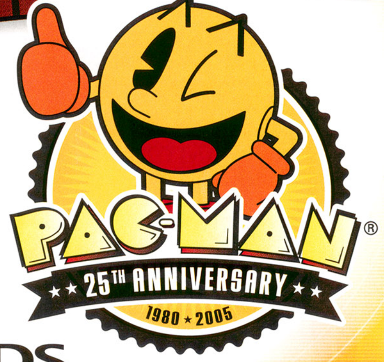
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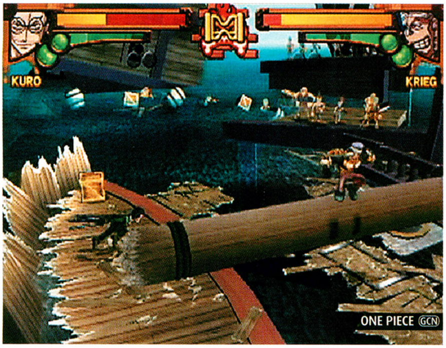
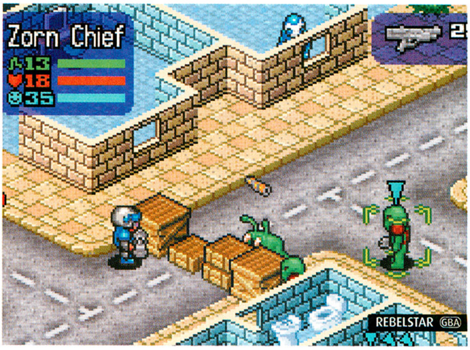


ONE PIECE (GCN)



REBELSTAR (GBA)

ONE PIECE: GRAND BATTLE

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube**
PUBLISHER: **Bandai**
DEVELOPER: **Ganbarion**
ESRB: **Teen**

Antic fighter One Piece: Grand Battle appears to have been cut from the same cloth as Super Smash Bros. Melee, but the pirate-anime-themed one-on-one fighter has far more spangles and tassels. Even though only two combatants rumble at a given time, support characters, a constantly moving camera and environmental objects that collapse onto the fighters create so much chaos that it's easy to lose focus on the clash between the sides. Some of the 16 playable characters (featured in Shonen Jump's *One Piece* television show) have abilities that are tuned for button-mashing. Others are more special-move-oriented. And you have to master each of them to unlock costumes, minigames and all seven arenas. Fans of the show will enjoy the customized in-fight dialogue between the characters. —**George S.**

REBELSTAR: TACTICAL COMMAND

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **Namco**
DEVELOPER: **Codo**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

Rebelstar thinks in 3-D. And that's a huge contrast to most turn-based tactics games, which—even if they factor altitudes into battles—don't really push the player to think about realistic factors. That's where this game shines. Others let you survey the field from a godlike position; Rebelstar lets you see only what's staring each of your men in the face. The result? A much greater feeling of being on the battlefield, where risk, surprise, fear and paranoia are palpable. Other games stick with wide-open spaces; Rebelstar takes the battle into buildings, down narrow halls, around tight corners and past windows. With sight lines being so integral, the environment can be your best friend, letting you duck for cover, snipe out of windows and ambush foes when they're tripping over each other in halls. It can also be your worst enemy, since your foes will try to use those factors against you, too. So you'll have to look into windows, carefully turn corners and use obstructions for cover whenever possible—or your dudes will be shipped home in caskets pretty quickly. The system is fascinating, and one that any tactics fan will enjoy despite the game's many flaws. Menu systems require too much handling. Most maps are far larger than one GBA screen, which makes the constant long-range combat hard to follow. Your troops often look identical, distinguishable only by whatever they're holding. And the isometric design can hide an object from you even when it's at your feet. But although the 25 missions, which spin a good yarn about rebels resisting alien overlords, are over within a few days of play (short by some tactics standards), the game offers a Skirmish mode that lets you wage new wars across the 25 fields, either solo or two-player, one-GBA hotseat style. —**Steven G.**

TO ARMS!

ARE YOU NOT ENTERTAINED?

SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR

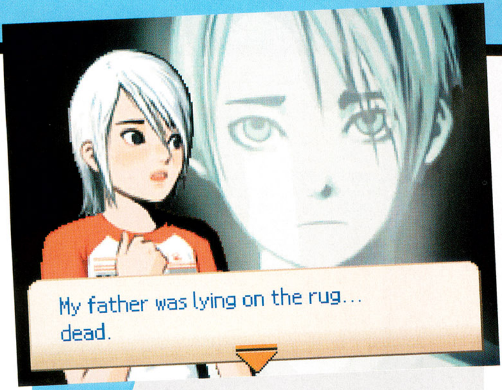
RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube**
PUBLISHER: **Sega**
DEVELOPER: **The Creative Assembly**
ESRB: **Mature**

At first blush, Spartan may come across as a simple hack-'n'-slash; something akin to Dynasty Warriors. And at its core, that's what it is. You play as a single warrior slicing and dicing through legions of adversaries. But each scenario is so unique, each battle so fully realized, that it becomes something more. You're never going through the motions, simply vanquishing every foe in sight or hacking your way from point A to point B. Over the course of the game, you'll protect a farm village from barbarian hordes, hunt down assassins in the city of Athens and even lead an assault on a Medusa-powered weapon of mass destruction. And though you control only the protagonist, there's usually so much going on around you that it feels like you're in the middle of an epic conflict. It's not just infantry combating infantry, either. Archers pick off troops from atop watchtowers, ballistae mow down entire phalanxes and medieval flamethrowers set buildings ablaze. That level of complexity makes the battles more convincing and helps immerse you in the experience. Unfortunately, the occasional solo mission where you're not fighting alongside your fellow troops tends to drag the game down a bit.

When it's at its best, Spartan offers an unparalleled sense of size and scope. Some of the environments are truly massive, and even with over a hundred soldiers on-screen at once, the frame rate remains consistently smooth. The character models look pretty blocky up close, but that seems a fair trade-off for such a grandiose spectacle. Rounding out the presentation is some solid voice acting and a quality soundtrack. The music isn't quite what you'd expect in this type of game (i.e., a sweeping classical score), but it usually fits the situation well.

Though it doesn't quite reach the staggering heights of The Creative Assembly's PC strategy titles, the Total Warrior franchise has gotten off to a great start. Hopefully the game does well enough that we get to see where these guys take the series on the next-gen consoles.
—**Steve T.**



My father was lying on the rug...
dead.

CSI: SEATTLE

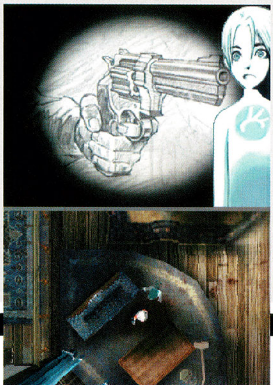
MEMORY SERVES

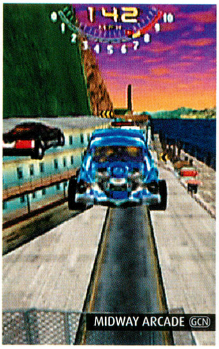
TRACE MEMORY

RATING: 8.5

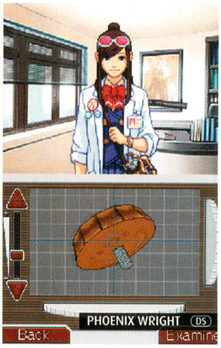
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **CING**
ESRB: **TEEN**

A tale of two families unfolds like intricate origami in short but satisfying DS mystery Trace Memory. Taking place over six chapters (each requiring about an hour of gameplay), the title tells the story of 13-year-old Ashley Robbins and her quest to discover the truth about her parents' decade-long absence on an island in Washington State's Puget Sound. A ghost, a mysterious science project and memories lost then found figure into the moody yarn. As you explore the creepy environment, the DS's lower screen displays a 3-D overhead view while the upper screen shows scenes from the character's perspective. When you choose to investigate or manipulate objects, the upper picture slips to the lower screen. Using touch control, you can push a stubborn rock out the way, scratch rust off a metal plate to reveal a clue, press buttons and throw items. The DS microphone is also used, though sparingly, and a device within the game allows you to take pictures of objects and overlap them with other pictures to piece together puzzle answers. The game uses every opportunity to challenge your investigative abilities. It also keeps the puzzle-solving process neatly contained. You'll spy a box of metal spheres near the end of the first chapter, but Ashley won't think to pick one of them up until you find a place nearby where a metal sphere is missing. At that time, you can return to the box and collect the key item. Backtracking is common, but usually limited to an area two or three rooms in size. The game's atmosphere is rich with creepy music and sparkling dialogue, though some players may find the game long on conversation and short on action. Trace Memory does not take much time to play, but a second run through results in a few new story nuances and a slightly different ending. All in all, the elements add up to a memorable DS adventure. —GEORGE S.





MIDWAY ARCADE (GCN)



PHOENIX WRIGHT (DS)

MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES 3

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
DEVELOPER: **GAME STAR/DIGITAL ECLIPSE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

No genre sums up the arcade experience better than racing—the rumbling seat, steering-wheel controller, foot pedals. Though Midway Arcade Treasures 3 can't deliver all of the arcade-cabinet bells and whistles, it does package eight of the arcade giant's racers into one disc. Hydro Thunder, Off Road Thunder: Mud, Sweat 'N Gears, San Francisco Rush 2049 and San Francisco Rush The Rock: Alcatraz Edition, all originally released in the late '90s or early '00s, offer solid 3-D driving experiences. The graphics aren't at the quality of those for current GCN racers, but the play control and physics are expertly tuned. Race Drivin' and S.T.U.N. Runner are late-'80s or early-'90s 3-D titles with low-polygon counts. Badlands (1989) and Super Off Road (also 1989) are overhead-view single-screen racers for up to three players. None of the games are must-haves, but the full collection will please old-school racing fans. —GEORGE S.

PHOENIX WRIGHT: ACE ATTORNEY

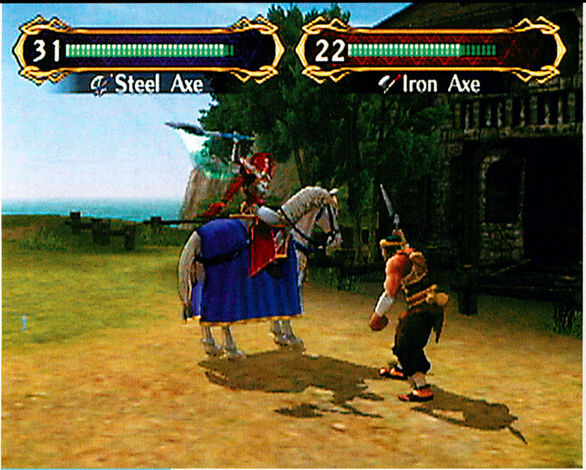
RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**
ESRB: **TEEN**

The graphic adventure almost died in North America, but Japan has kept it alive. So it's only fitting that Phoenix Wright, which introduces the fine legal series Gyakuten Saiban on this side of the Pacific, uses its first GBA game as its foundation, but vastly balances its text-heavy, menu-driven experience with dual views and touch control.

Is practicing law dull? Not in this game, where you'll defend five murder cases (four from the GBA game, plus a brand-new one that has a cool 3-D evidence handler). Courtroom scenes move at a tennis-match pace as manga-style action slashes back and forth between you, the prosecution and the witness on the stand. After the prosecutor concludes his interrogation, you'll cross-examine, picking apart the testimonial sentence by sentence, demanding further explanation (What did the killer look like? Why did you have a wiretap?) and slapping down evidence to reveal contradictions (photos! murder weapons!).

Intense, yes. But never too serious. Corny wordplay puts witnesses like sweaty Sal Manilla on the stand. Goofy parodies send Redd White of BlueCorp, a president who says he's above the law, to butcher English before the court. And a love of lusty gags sends Miss April May, a bubbly vixen, to expose more cleavage than truth. The writing is dead-on, a must for a text-heavy adventure. But when court adjourns and you spend half of the game at other locales (murder scenes, law offices) to scare up more evidence, Phoenix Wright falters. Although half of that part of the game is funny and fast-paced, the rest requires too much circling back to previous spots to see if a potential witness has shown up, often without any logical reason. But overall, Phoenix Wright keeps its legal-eagle fantasy flying much of the time—it's a welcome DS addition. —STEVEN G.



WHY EVEN TRY, BANDIT?

TRIAL BY FIRE

FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE

RATING: 9.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Surviving the transformation from 2-D to 3-D is a difficult journey for any game franchise, especially one with a long history. But Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance accomplishes the task beautifully. The massive title (clocking in at over 60 gameplay hours) stands apart from previous Fire Emblem games, taking the series to a new level of quality, but at the same time it retains and enhances the aspects that fans love about the series.

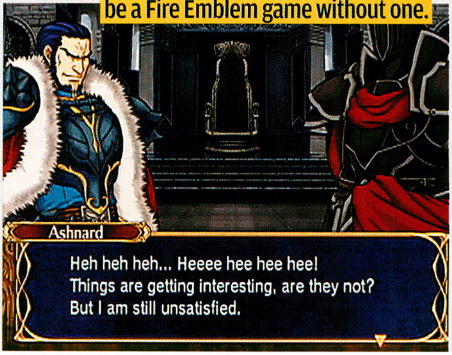
Though Path of Radiance is the series's first foray on the GCN, it's a Fire Emblem game through and through. The fundamentals are all present—they've just been amplified. Path of Radiance has more character types, more weapons and even more chapters than previous FE games. The greatest enhancement, though, lies in the story. Intelligent Systems has always managed to cram incredibly deep plots into its GBA Fire Emblem titles, but the storytelling in this one goes far beyond its predecessors'. The tale involves a small band of mercenaries that becomes something much greater, playing a key role in a large-scale war that is tearing the continent apart. The main character, Ike, is a nobody who must rise to power and bridge the gap between the continent's feuding races. The yearlong saga deals with issues such as war and racism authentically, and avoids video game clichés all the way to the story's conclusion.

Path of Radiance also includes features completely new to the franchise. The base (which you can access between battles) is home to the most noticeable ones. In addition to providing fundamental character and inventory management, the base lets you assign experience points and special skills to individual units. Each special skill (which you find as an item on the battlefield) has its own effect, ranging from healing your unit to allowing your unit to strike an enemy twice in one turn. Skills are a great way to control which units will become your party's powerhouses. The base is also where you can strike up conversations between party members, including support conversations (which, in previous Fire Emblem games, awkwardly took place on the battlefield), and it serves as home to a merchant convoy that includes a blacksmith who can forge custom swords, lances, axes, bows and even magic tomes for your party members.

On the battlefield, Path of Radiance introduces a few new elements. First is the Laguz, a race of creatures that shape-shift from human to animal. There are three types of Laguz: birds, beasts and dragons. What makes the creatures unique is that they can attack only while in animal form, and they can stay in animal form only for a certain amount of time (depending on the character's level). Throughout the game, you'll recruit characters of all three Laguz types to fight alongside Fire Emblem staple classes such as Pegasus Knights and Paladins. Another nice addition is to the battlefield mechanics; you now have the ability to give special commands to the entire party rather than to each unit individually. The new command option works nicely for moving your party across a large map quickly, but it can also be dangerous when protecting weak units on a particularly difficult map. The last new battlefield feature worth mentioning: Path of Radiance gives players the ability to multiselect enemies to check the troop's overall hit zone. This is a small addition, but an incredibly intuitive and useful one.

If Fire Emblem suffered at all on its journey from GBA to GCN, it's in the game's presentation. The music is well-written, if not fully orchestrated. The cut-scenes are stunning, but there are only six in the game (that's roughly one every 10 hours). Generally, the game's battle animations aren't bad—some appear rigid and are overly repetitive. But these shortcomings barely hinder the overall experience. The battle system and story are the bread and butter of the game, and they are executed flawlessly. Intelligent Systems has created a masterpiece with Path of Radiance. It sets a new standard for Fire Emblem as the title that future games in the series will be tested by. —**ANDY M.**

An evil king way off his rocker? It wouldn't be a Fire Emblem game without one.



Ashnard

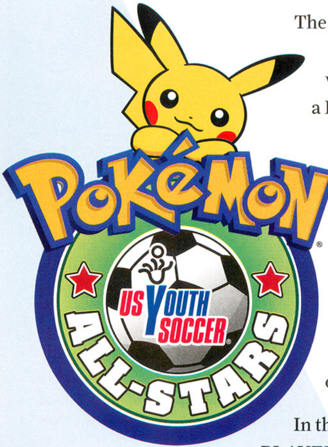
Heh heh heh... Heeee hee hee hee!
Things are getting interesting, are they not?
But I am still unsatisfied.

Calling Out to US Youth Soccer Players!

WIN BIG! REACH YOUR GOALS!

Pokémon, the official Youth Entertainment sponsor of US Youth Soccer, has teamed up with US Youth Soccer to do a lot of great things this year, and one of the most exciting things for US Youth Soccer players is our "Pokémon US Youth Soccer All-Stars" contest.

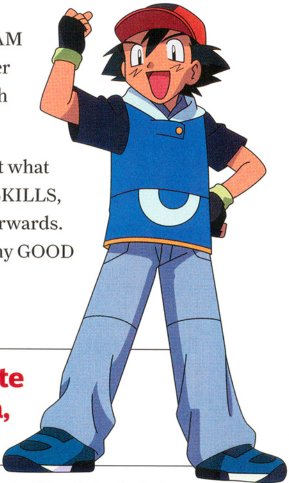
Pokémon US Youth Soccer All-Stars is an essay contest that will award $3,000 higher education scholarships to 10 US Youth Soccer players who embody the values of a Pokémon US Youth Soccer All-Star!



The contest is open to US Youth Soccer players (registered members) under age 19 who as part of their entry application compose an essay of 150 words or less, describing a time when they exhibited 3 of the 5 values of a Pokémon US Youth Soccer All-Star.

So, you may be asking, what exactly is a Pokémon US Youth Soccer All-Star?

Well, a Pokémon US Youth Soccer All-Star demonstrates values that both Pokémon and US Youth Soccer share, such as Teamwork, Good Sportsmanship, Hard Work, Improved Skills, and Being a Good Student. These values help everyone reach their goals, whether they are training to become a Pokémon Master, a US Youth Soccer champ, or both!



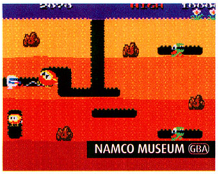
In the Pokémon world, Ash knows that being a TEAM PLAYER is important if he wants to be his best. Whether it's working with his friends to beat Team Rocket or having his Pokémon help each other in a battle, teamwork always helps Ash achieve his goals!

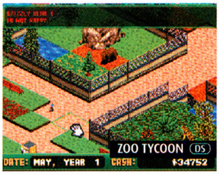
Ash is always WORKING HARD to train his Pokémon and himself to get better at what they do. Every battle is another chance for Ash to learn more and IMPROVE his SKILLS, and whether he wins or loses, Ash always shows GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP afterwards. He knows he's learned something important from every challenge he faces, like any GOOD STUDENT.

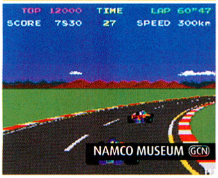
Ash has the qualities of a Pokémon US Youth Soccer All-Star—do you?

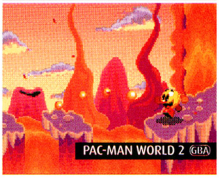
For more information, including complete contest rules and the official entry form, visit pokémon.com

Contest only open to United States Youth Soccer Association, Inc. (US Youth Soccer) members in good standing who are legal U.S. residents and under 19 at entry time. Void where prohibited. Sponsor: Pokemon USA, Inc. Entries will be judged by Sponsor according to criteria established by an independent judging organization. One boy entrant from each of 5 different age groups, and one girl entrant from each of 5 different age groups will each receive $3,000 deposited into a certificate of deposit under a 529 Plan. Subject to Official Rules available at www.Pokemon.com. You can enter by completing a form available at www.Pokemon.com or by printing on a 3"x5" piece of paper your name, gender, complete address, date of birth, the names of your US Youth Soccer league and team, the daytime phone number of your parent/legal guardian and getting this signed by your parent/legal guardian and either your US Youth Soccer coach or one of your school teachers, and attaching your essay written on an 8.5"x11" piece of paper and sending it to "Pokémon All-Star Entries", Box 5648, Ellenton, FL 34222-5006. Entries must be postmarked by 10/31/05 and received no later than 11/7/05.









NAMCO MUSEUM 50TH ANNIVERSARY ARCADE COLLECTION

GCN RATING: 7.0

GBA RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE, GAME BOY ADVANCE**
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO**
DEVELOPER: **NAMCO/DIGITAL ECLIPSE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+ (GCN), EVERYONE (GBA)**

Weighing in with 16 games ranging from Ms. Pac-Man to Galaxian to Rolling Thunder, the GCN version of Namco's latest classics compilation is reasonably meaty. Some of the titles stand the test of time better than others (I'm looking at you, Pole Position), but almost all of them hold a pretty important place in gaming history, making this a worthwhile purchase for serious collectors. Unfortunately, there isn't much to it beyond the games. There's no concept art, developer interviews or any of the other bells and whistles you'll find in some of the other compilations out there; just a bizarre '80s soundtrack that plays while you navigate the menu screens. The lack of extras is even more significant in the GBA collection because it consists of only five titles (including Pac-Man and Ms. Pac-Man). And it doesn't even offer any Fine Young Cannibals tunes. —**STEVE T.**

ZOO TYCOON DS

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **ALTRON**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

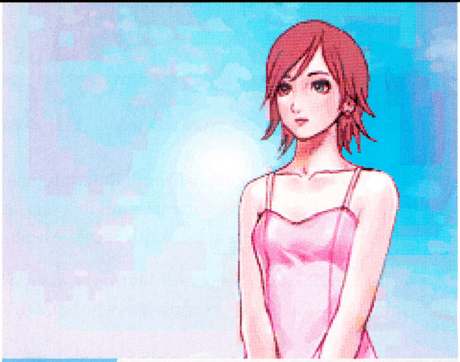
You may think anyone who has fun feeding bears and shoveling elephant poo is nuts, but five million Zoo Tycoon fans would insist that you'd have to be crazy not to have fun. THQ's DS version of the PC zoo-management sim faithfully reproduces the ZT experience, from building exhibits and guest facilities to managing cash flow. The dual screen allows you to monitor the results of your tinkering (zoo view on top, charts on bottom), and fence-building using the touch screen is an improvement over the PC's clunky cursor-controlled system. There are minor lapses, such as the inability to set most prices or assign a single zookeeper to multiple exhibits, which can lead to frantic activity as you rush to keep your animals happy. But enough grousing. This Zoo Tycoon is a keeper. —**SCOTT P.**

PAC-MAN WORLD 2

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **GAME BOY ADVANCE**
PUBLISHER: **DESTINATION SOFTWARE**
DEVELOPER: **FULL FAT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

If someone 10 years ago would have asked me the question, "Will you still need passwords to save your progress in a game 10 years from now?" I would have answered with a resounding, "No!" Well, Pac-Man World 2 proves that I'm no prophet. And as if that element weren't enough to make you cringe, the game has loads of unforgiving jumps, combined with an isometric camera angle that would make any gamer pass out from Pac-Man fever. Maybe I'm exaggerating a bit, but it really does get to be too much in a few areas (the forest level is a prime example). Overall, however, the game does have a unique flavor that's hard to put your finger on. Perhaps it's the old-school love-it-or-leave-it style of play. Unless you have a real Pac-fixation, I'd advise you leave it. —**PETE M.**



I WILL SURVIVE

GONE FISHIN'

LOST IN BLUE

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **KONAMI**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Lost in Blue is a very simple game. You live day by day, exploring the island and collecting food for you and your companion, all while looking for a way off the island. The game's appearance reflects this simplicity—in particular, minimal onscreen information helps immerse you in the environment. The touch-screen controls mirror what you would do instinctively in real life, such as stabbing fish with spears using the stylus, or blowing into the microphone to start fires from embers. And the game wouldn't even be possible without the second screen—the characters' vital signs and persistent map are invaluable.

Because the game doesn't rely on an intricate story, your personal experience on the island takes center stage. But curiously, the game provides no challenges that drive you toward getting off the island. Your only motivation is your own adventurous nature. What results is a deep, intimate connection between you and the main character—he does only as much as you want him to, and if you don't want him to do much of anything, that's just fine. The game adopts your personality: if you're finding the game boring, it's your own fault for not doing more. It's a brilliant role reversal between the game and the player—rather than the game pulling you into the storyline and guiding your progress, you're driving the game's progress.

However, Lost in Blue suffers in its ability to create suspense. When you decide to brave the wilderness and explore the whole island, you feel as if you've landed on the safest island in the world—there is little chance that you'll face wild animals, headhunting natives or even dangerous terrain. The big story twist happens at the very end of the game, and even then it doesn't play out fully before the game is over. It's okay that the title's pace is slow and methodical, but it lacks the hidden dangers one would expect in a strange and unknown place.

Once you've completed the game as the boy, you can go back and relive the experience from the girl's point of view. Her life is dramatically different—it's worth doing so to see what she did all day while the boy was away. Her tasks also make much more use of the DS's unique controls than his do.

Being stuck on a deserted island is something very few people would care to experience, but if Lost in Blue is any indication, maybe life wouldn't be bad. —**CHRIS S.**

WHO ARE YOU?
NOW IN STEREO
DONKEY KONG
NINTENDO
DK
GAME BOY ADVANCE SP

SWINGING
SPINNING
SMASHER

DK™
KING OF SWING

IT'S ALL IN THE SHOULDER BUTTONS. SWING THROUGH THE AIR AND SPIN ON PEGS AS YOU BUILD UP MOMENTUM TO CRUSH YOUR ENEMIES. USE YOUR OWN KIND OF SWING TO BECOME THE KING IN DK: KING OF SWING. ONLY FOR GAME BOY ADVANCE.

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

GAME BOY ADVANCE SP

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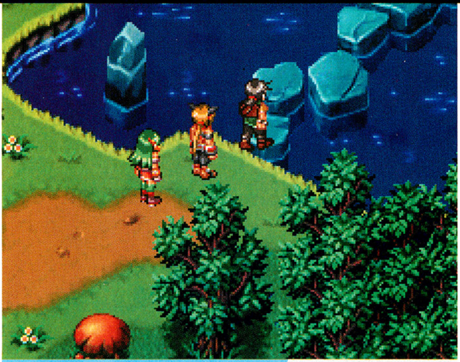


THE TIME FOR VALOR HAS RETURNED AGAIN

SLIGHTLY OFF-KEY

LUNAR: DRAGON SONG

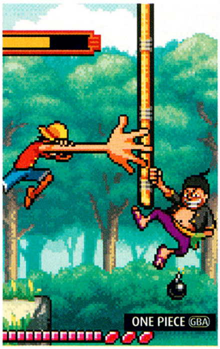
RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: JAPAN ART MEDIA/ GAME ARTS
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

I can't tell you how much the above score pains me. The Lunar series, with its memorable cast of characters and sincere storytelling, holds a special place in my heart. In fact, it's the biggest reason I'm doing this for a living. Dragon Song, while not a bad game by any stretch, comes nowhere close to living up to that legacy. Set 1,000 years before the first game, it does tragically little to expand the saga or enrich our understanding of the Lunar universe. Instead, the story feels like merely a means of shepherding the player from one monster-filled dungeon to the next. The lack of animated cut-scenes, which are a hallmark of the series, further contributes to the underwhelming nature of the game's narrative. And though some of the characters are intriguing, their motivations are often unclear or underdeveloped (which may be a result of the inconsistent localization quality).

The game isn't terribly big, but it takes upwards of 30 hours to complete thanks to frequent enemy encounters. Before battle, you must choose between Combat and Virtue mode. The former causes monsters to drop items, and the latter is the only way to accrue experience points. While in Virtue mode, defeating all of the monsters in an area will also unlock a special blue treasure chest. It's a welcome twist to the traditional RPG formula. Unfortunately, the battles themselves can get incredibly tedious. The most significant problem is that you can't choose which enemy to target, severely limiting your strategic options.

Despite falling short of expectations, Lunar: Dragon Song ultimately delivers a worthwhile adventure. The story has its moments (I'm particularly fond of the unorthodox ending), the music is quite good, and for longtime fans, Toshiyuki Kubooka's character designs lend the game a warm familiarity. The series deserves better than Dragon Song, though. Hopefully Game Arts will hand the reigns back to the original development team and recapture that lost magic.
—STEVE T.

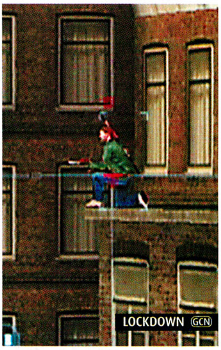


ONE PIECE

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: BANDAI
DEVELOPER: DIMPS
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

As cartoon-crossover fighting platformers go, swashbuckler One Piece is a real treasure. Though the game never strays far from its jumping-and-punching roots, responsive control, surprising special moves and a load of unlockables and hidden items make the game an entertaining play, giving you the drive to see it through all 18 levels. Monkey D. Luffy is the star, but the pliable young pirate gets help from fellow adventurers Zolo, Nami, Usopp and Sanji, who Luffy can call to swoop down and attack his enemies. Luffy stretches to reach distant objects, then slingshots past them and rockets into his adversaries. He also winds up and slugs foes from afar and turns into a giant ball after launching himself from a cannon. Carrying off the moves is effortless, allowing you to focus all of your attention on the action and none on figuring out button combinations. Boss battles provide a unique and challenging break during each level. Once you've finished an area, you can return to find all of the bonus-unlocking hidden coins, some of which require back-and-forth key collection and door unlocking to uncover. The game's GCN namesake, fighter One Piece: Grand Battle, recreates the atmosphere of the TV show to chaotic effect, but this GBA adventure is more streamlined and works better as a stand-alone game.
—GEORGE S.

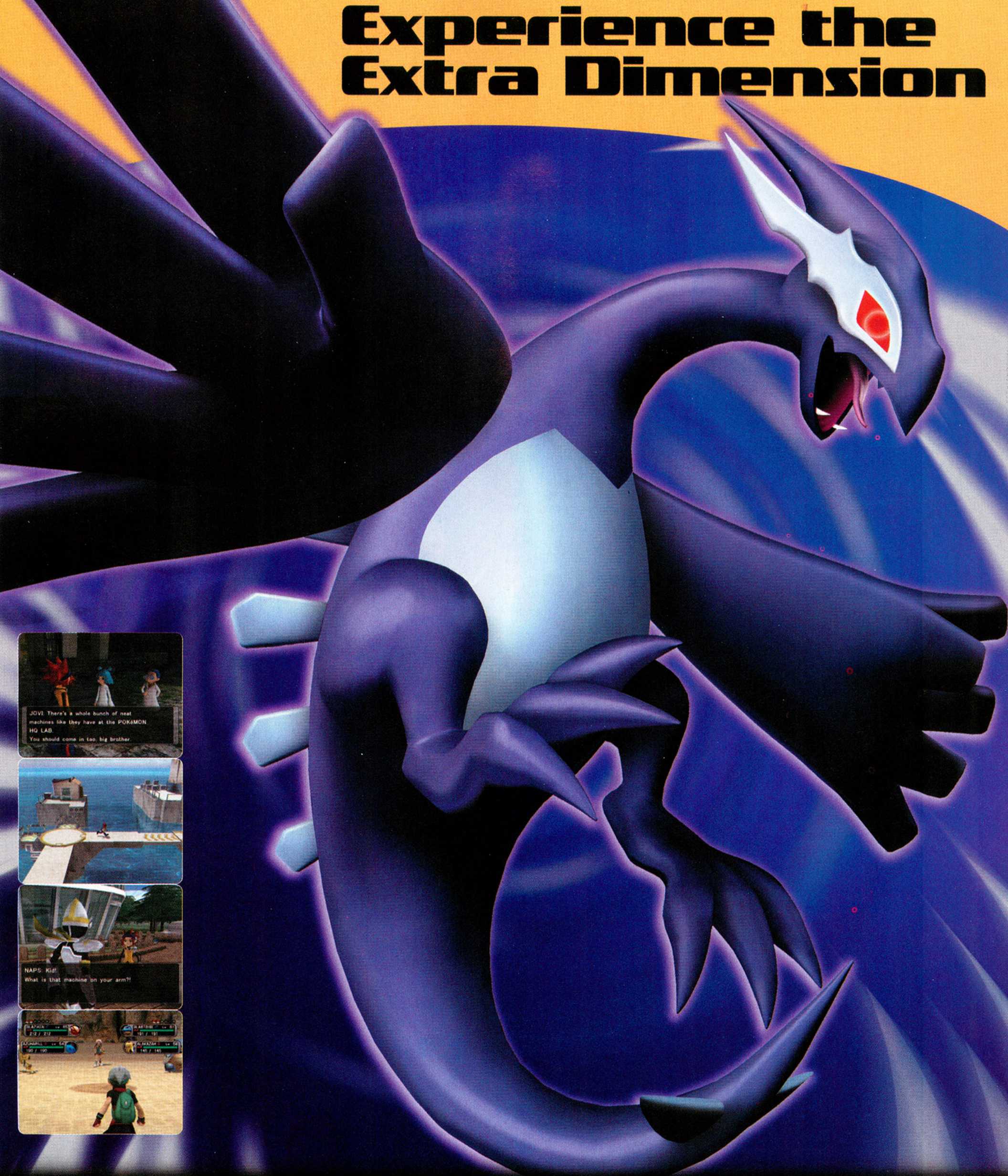


TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX: LOCKDOWN

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT MONTREAL
ESRB: MATURE

When it comes to the Rainbow Six series, there seems to be some kind of zero-sum tradeoff between good graphics and interesting game play. Previous titles leaned toward the latter—they deftly brought the intricacies of squad-based combat to consoles, and pioneered intelligent, methodical play, but they also featured clunky graphics and dodgy frame rate. Lockdown swings completely the other way—realistic environments and effective lighting make for amazing visuals, but all of the fun team-combat mechanics have been tossed out the window in favor of dull-witted, fast-paced fighting. Your teammates have no sense of their surroundings—they frequently run into firefights or turn their backs on enemies as if ignoring them will make them go away. Fortunately, the enemies behave roughly the same—they seldom use cover, and they often bunch together, allowing you to wipe out a whole squad with one machine-gun pass. Other nuances such as hokey character stereotypes don't make any sense—one would doubt that an entire elite combat team would choose to speak in their original language while working as a group. Also, how you outfit your team seems to have little to do with how they perform. As an action game, it's intense and fun; as a tactical game . . . well, it's not one.
—CHRIS S.



Experience the Extra Dimension

JOVI: There's a whole bunch of neat machines like they have at the POKéMON HQ LAB.
You should come in too, big brother.

NAPS: Kid!
What is that machine on your arm?!

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Cartoon Violence

Darkness has fallen over the land of Orre. Unravel the mystery of Shadow Lugia and battle your way across a vast land to purify the Shadow Pokémon before it's too late. Get ready for an all new RPG adventure in stunning 3D. Only for Nintendo GameCube.

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Pokémon XD
Gale of Darkness

NINTENDO
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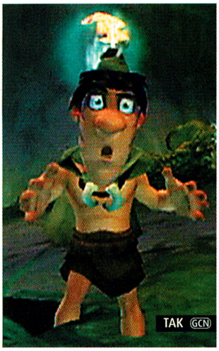
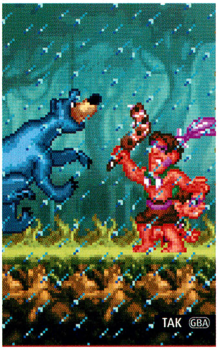
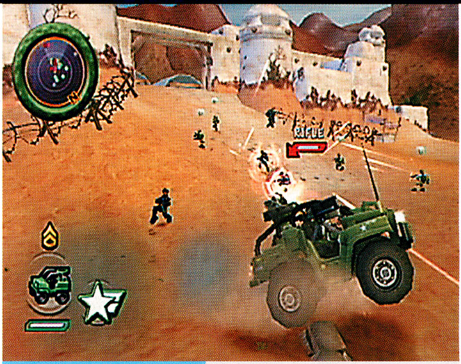






TAK: THE GREAT JUJU CHALLENGE

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **AVALANCHE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Patrick Warburton is a comic genius; so much so that Tak: The Great Juju Challenge is worth playing solely on the merits of the hilarious voice work from the man who played the The Tick in the short-lived *The Tick* live-action series, and Puddy in *Seinfeld*. Warburton lends his voice to strongman Lok in well-crafted cut-scenes and during the game's cooperative gameplay. The adventure, which pits Tak (voiced by Jason Marsden) and Lok against three pairs of adventurers from competing tribes in a race for the favors of the Moon Juju, reaches well beyond the depth and quality of previous Tak games. Jumping sections are much more forgiving than in previous Tak games (and the GBA version of this title) and the teamwork-driven puzzle-solving is challenging but rarely frustrating. In one particularly inspired section, Lok dons a lobster suit for underwater diving and cuts ropes that are attached to barrels by using his crustacean claws while exploring the deep. When the barrels surface, Tak uses them as platforms to advance to the other side of an alligator-infested river. A single player can control the actions of both characters, switching back and forth with a press of a button. Two players work simultaneously using a split screen, and the second player can drop in and out of the game at will without interrupting the action for the other player. Players rotate the camera to look around at the environment, but an option to pull back to look at set-piece puzzles as a whole would have been nice. A map or other navigation tools would be useful, too, as it's easy to get turned around in the game's complex environments. In its humor, gameplay and general accessibility, though, Tak: The Great Juju Challenge is a giant leap for character-based platformers. —**GEORGE S.**

TAK: THE GREAT JUJU CHALLENGE

RATING: 4.0

PLATFORM: **GAME BOY ADVANCE**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **WAYFORWARD**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Tak, the little shaman that could, joins forces with strongman Lok in a single-player, tag-team GBA platformer that maintains the lighthearted atmosphere of previous Tak games but is weighed down with unneeded difficulty in its jumping game. Wide gaps that require perfectly timed leaps litter the five-world landscape. Though most missed jumps offer a safe landing, allowing you to try again immediately, you might begin to question the fun of falling after multiple failed attempts. Adding to the frustration, your tagalong partner often follows so closely that you can't see your own character's footing. Fortunately, Lok's presence isn't without benefit; Tak has projectile attacks whereas Lok is a strong contact fighter who can glide for a while if you get his three-button combination down. The characters also engage in teamwork to solve puzzles, but as with jumping, the sense of control over those actions is hit-and-miss. —**GEORGE S.**

YOU DROPPED A BOMB ON ME

MAGIC BULLET

BATTALION WARS

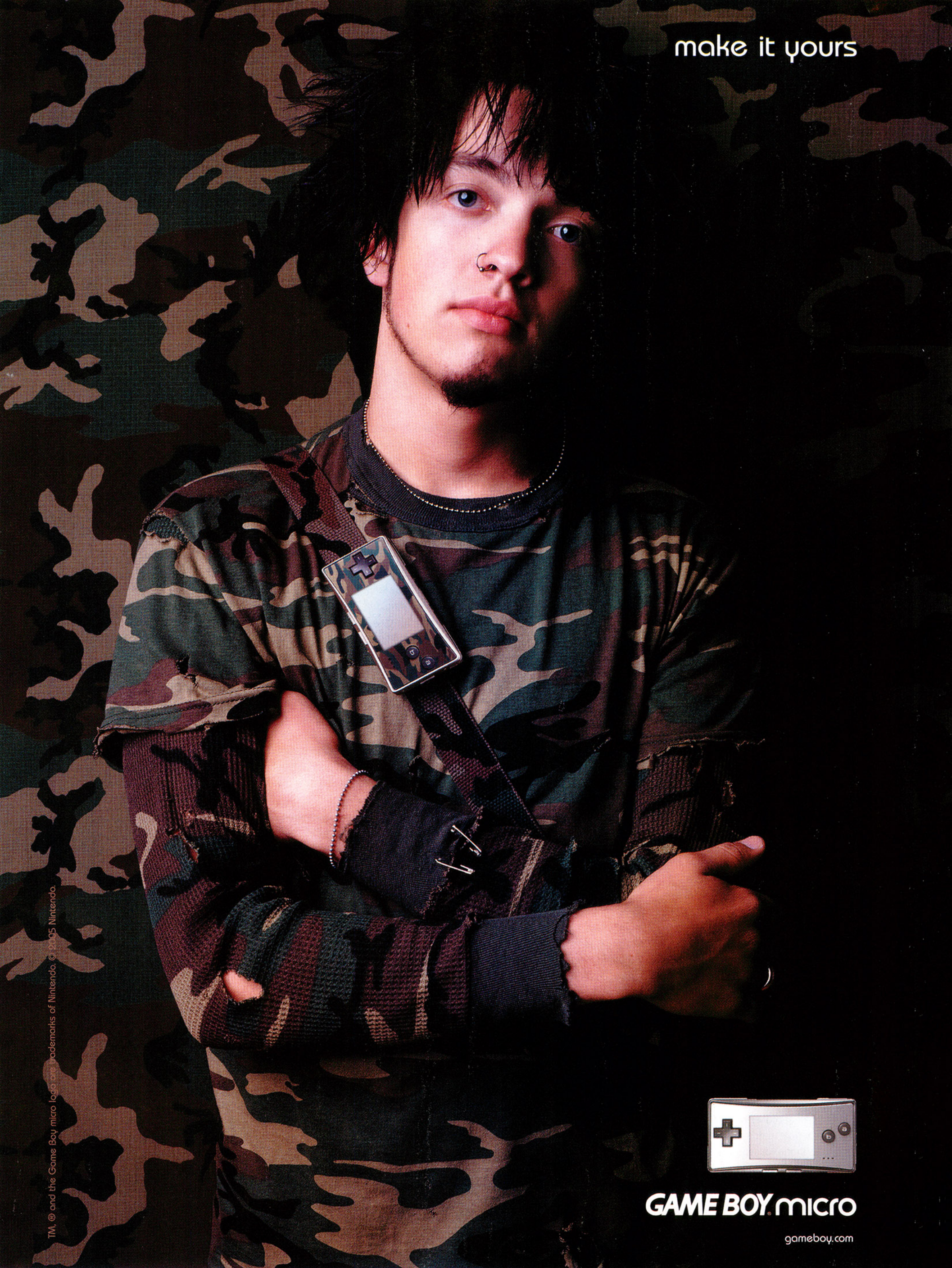
RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **KUJU**
ESRB: **TEEN**

When game developers mix genres, there's a danger that their efforts will aim at too many targets but hit none. Thankfully, British team Kuju gets close to the bull's-eye while aiming at both third-person battlefield action and real-time strategy in the ambitious Advance Wars spin-off Battalion Wars. Though you command a large force in your attempt to save the Western Frontier, first from the neighboring Tundrans then the mysterious Xylvanians, you control only one unit directly at a time and switch control from unit to unit with minimal effort. You can also give commands to other units—have them take defensive positions, select their targets and tell them to follow your lead. The scheme works well when the battles take place in concentrated areas, but juggling troops on two or three fronts is a hit-or-miss proposal. Even though you can toggle to an overhead view that mirrors that of a standard RTS, the control interface can't quite perform the functions of a computer mouse (the preferred control device for most real-time strategy games). The game also strays from the RTS formula by not giving you the ability to manage resources or create units.

RTS drawbacks aside, the game's onfield heroics are intense and satisfying. The playfully colorful graphics and cartoonish physics may be off-putting at first for those seeking a serious war sim, but the ability to lead the charge with soldiers, missile launchers, tanks, helicopters, bombers and fighter jets—all in one battle—gives the game a serious edge. Plus, the comical aspects make for a genuinely entertaining story and CG-movie-quality cut-scenes. Battalion Wars takes big bites out of the RTS and action genres and swallows them with gusto, with just the slightest hint of a bitter aftertaste.
—**GEORGE S.**

A sandy beach, barbed wire and explosions—paradise!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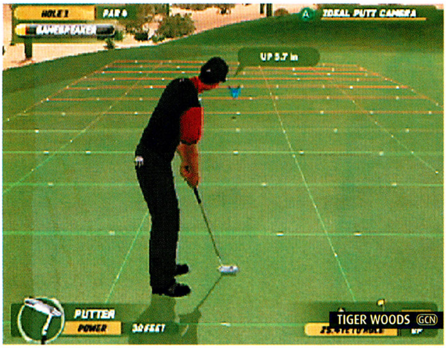

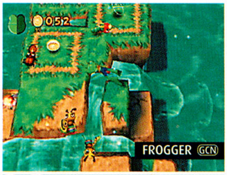

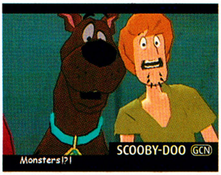

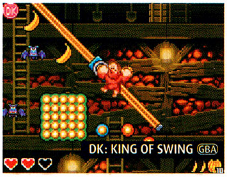

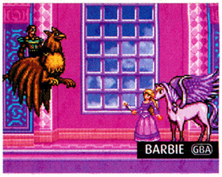

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 06

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA CANADA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Even if you're a mediocre golfer in real life, EA's Tiger Woods PGA Tour series has consistently delivered on its promise to make you play like a pro in the game world. The 2005 iteration went so far in that direction that rounds of 20 under par were commonplace. For the 2006 version, the pendulum swings toward more realistic scores with a revamped putting game and a modification to the basic swing. Putting cheat Tiger Vision and advice from your caddy are gone, forcing you to read the greens. The result is more two- and three-putt holes, but it's still not unheard of to knock it in from 40 feet. This year you can use the C Stick to hit the ball off-center to influence trajectory and spin. If you play fairways and greens, though, you'll have little need to shape your shot. Plus, you'll find that manipulating the C Stick while you're pressing the Z Button repeatedly to activate a power boost is more trouble than it's worth.

While building your character, you earn credits to add to your golfer's skills by nailing shots that showcase specific attributes. Good shots also contribute to the Game-breaker meter and a chance to hit an amazing shot at a crucial time. The meter builds slowly, though, so odds are that a Gamebreaker won't figure in to a nine-hole match.

Rivals mode replaces last year's Legends mode and has you following Tiger through four golfing eras, taking on fictional duffers and real pros in matches and special challenges. At the outset the series appears to have gone through big changes, but the overall playing experience is consistent with that of previous iterations—great, as always, with adjustments that ground the scores in PGA Tour-level reality. —**GEORGE S.**

FROGGER: ANCIENT SHADOW

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **HUDSON SOFT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Frogger: Ancient Shadow is not supposed to be easy. You don't enter one of the game's hop-and-avoid platforming levels thinking that you're going to get through it in a single try. You go as far as you can, fall into a pit or get hit by too many enemies, then start over with the knowledge that you'll go a little farther next time. Disheartening failure is followed by elevating success in a roller-coaster of loving-it-and-hating-it play. You earn wardrobe accessories by surviving a hop through uberchallenging side routes, and you can buy additional accessories with coins that you collect along the main route. The original Frogger arcade game is a sweet multiplayer bonus. —**GEORGE S.**

DK: KING OF SWING

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **GAME BOY ADVANCE**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **PAON**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Donkey Kong Country in a blender: that's the DKKOS experience. All of the core elements from DKC (Kremlings, bananas, barrels, bosses) get whirled into a crazy puree where DK doesn't platform, but rather spins around latch points. And when not spinning he's using spin momentum to soar to another point, where he'll spin again. King of Swing is as primally acrobatic as Donkey Kong's bongo platformer Jungle Beat, but on the GBA you'll perform moves with only L and R. Once you get used to careening like a shot-put through jungles, deserts, snowy landscapes and grottoes, it's pretty thrilling. Many level designs, however, force you through tight spots where you're helpless to avoid damage—and you'll fall to a lower area and lose many minutes of gameplay. Daring DK fans should still give the game a spin; old-schoolers may want to wait for DKC3. —**STEVEN G.**

SCOOBY-DOO! UNMASKED

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **A2M**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

THQ has released a steady stream of Scooby-Doo! games for the past five years, but none have gone beyond mediocre cartoon tie-in status until now. Scooby-Doo! Unmasked puts adventure-style sleuthing in the background and concentrates on 3-D platforming with moving objects, zip lines and springs. Playing through the game's 15 inspired levels is like jumping, sliding and rolling through a cel-shaded fun house. Scooby can don three different costumes to assume special powers, but the momentum comes to a halt when he has to scramble for raw material before he can create each costume. Adam West and the cartoon cast lend their vocal stylings to humorous cut-scenes. —**GEORGE S.**

ALSO THIS MONTH

Combining chess, checkers and backgammon, Destination's **Board Game Classics (GBA)** offers single-player matches at three difficulty levels against AI opponents. Some nontraditional chess sets make it difficult to identify pieces. . . . Just when you thought it was safe to go back to school, **Lizzie McGuire 3: Homecoming Havoc (GBA)** from Disney Interactive puts the scattered teen in the running for homecoming queen via a collection of WarioWare-style microgames. . . . Humongous Entertainment and Atari continue gridiron tradition with **Backyard Football 2006 (GBA)**, an NFL-licensed title featuring kid versions of 10 current stars. . . . With the people of her kingdom turned to statues, a princess ventures to save the day in VU Games's **Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus (GBA)**. . . . Cartoon ghostbuster Danny Fenton fights fate and frights in **Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy (GBA)** from THQ. . . . Activision Value's **Whac-a-Mole (DS)**, a game for the Carl Spackler in all of us, lets two players jab rodents using touch control. . . . Magic users Will, Irma, Taranee, Cornelia and Hay Lin conjure up a platforming adventure in Buena Vista Interactive's **W.I.T.C.H. (GBA)**, based on the ABC Family cartoon. . . . Arbor Day has passed, but you can still celebrate with Namco's book-based adventure **The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree (GBA)**. . . . Crave's **The Bible Game (GBA)** tests your Good Book knowledge between bouts with "Herra Ticks."

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TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Violence

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[ARCHIVE]

MARIO: MR. OCTOBER

Just in time for the MLB playoffs to begin, Mario Superstar Baseball enters the archives. The game rated a 9.0 for its great play control, multiplayer party atmosphere and creative use of the Mario-franchise characters, including a spotlight on significant matchups. Let's hope the playoffs are as exciting.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius: The Attack of the Twonkies	4.0	THQ	186	E
Alien Hominid	6.5	O~3	187	T
Animaniacs: The Great Edgar Hunt	3.0	Ignition	190	E
Bad Boys: Miami Takedown	2.5	Empire Interactive	185	M
Baten Kaitos: Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean	9.0	Namco	187	T
Batman Begins	6.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adventures	4.5	Activision	189	T
Call of Duty: Finest Hour	7.0	Activision	187	T
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	2.5	Global Star	195	E
Def Jam: Fight for NY	7.5	Electronic Arts	186	M
Digimon Rumble Arena 2	6.0	Bandai	185	T
Digimon World 4	7.0	Bandai	193	E
Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	9.0	Nintendo	191	E 10+
Donkey Konga	8.5	Nintendo	185	E
Donkey Konga 2	7.5	Nintendo	192	T
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	5.0	Atari	188	T
Dragon Ball Z: Sagas	5.5	Atari	192	T
Dreamworks' Shark Tale	4.5	Activision	185	E
The Fairly OddParents!: Shadow Showdown	4.5	THQ	185	E
Fantastic Four	6.0	Activision	194	T
FIFA Soccer 2005	8.5	Electronic Arts	186	E
FIFA Street	6.0	Electronic Arts	191	E
Fight Night: Round 2	8.0	Electronic Arts	191	T
Geist	5.0	Nintendo	196	M
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	5.5	Electronic Arts	188	T
Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life	7.5	Natsume	195	E
Hello Kitty: Roller Rescue	5.0	Namco	196	E
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	8.5	VU Games	196	T
The Incredibles	7.0	THQ	186	T
Intellivision Lives!	3.0	Crave	187	E
International Golf and Tennis	3.0	Ignition	193	E
Killer 7	8.5	Capcom	193	M
King Arthur	4.5	Konami	187	T
Knights of the Temple	5.0	Aspyr	194	M
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	7.0	Activision	188	E
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	6.5	Electronic Arts	187	T
Madagascar	6.0	Activision	194	E 10+
Madden NFL 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	195	E
Mario Party 6	7.5	Nintendo	188	E
Mario Power Tennis	7.0	Nintendo	187	E
Mario Superstar Baseball	9.0	Nintendo	196	E
MC Groovz: Dancecraze	5.0	Mad Catz	189	E
Medal of Honor: European Assault	8.0	Electronic Arts	194	T
Mega Man X: Command Mission	6.5	Capcom	186	E
Metroid Prime 2 Echoes	9.5	Nintendo	187	T
Midway Arcade Treasures 2	7.5	Midway	188	M
Mortal Kombat: Deception	7.5	Midway	191	M
MVP Baseball 2005	9.0	Electronic Arts	191	E
NASCAR 2005: Chase for the Cup	7.5	Electronic Arts	185	E
NBA Live 2005	7.5	Electronic Arts	186	E
NBA Street V3	7.5	Electronic Arts	190	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	7.5	Electronic Arts	188	E
NFL Street 2	7.0	Electronic Arts	189	E
NHL 2005	7.0	Electronic Arts	186	E
Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door	9.0	Nintendo	186	E
Pinball Hall of Fame	4.5	Crave	189	E
The Polar Express	5.0	THQ	187	E
Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	5.0	THQ	186	E
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	9.0	Ubisoft	188	M
Rave Master	5.0	Konami	192	T
Resident Evil 4	10.0	Capcom	189	M
Robots	5.0	VU Games	190	E
Scaler	6.5	Global Star	188	E
Second Sight	9.5	Codemasters	185	T
Sonic Gems Collection	8.5	Sega	195	E
The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie	7.0	THQ	186	E
Spyro: A Hero's Tail	5.5	VU Games	187	E
SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	7.5	Namco	185	T
Star Fox: Assault	8.0	Nintendo	189	T
Strike Force Bowling	4.5	Crave	190	E
Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams	8.0	THQ	186	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Melee	3.0	Konami	192	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2: Battle Nexus	4.0	Konami	186	T
Terminator 3: The Redemption	7.5	Atari	185	T
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	8.5	Electronic Arts	186	E
TimeSplitters: Future Perfect	8.5	Electronic Arts	191	M
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2	4.5	Ubisoft	192	T
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	Ubisoft	192	M
Tony Hawk's Underground 2: World Destruction Tour	7.5	Activision	186	T
Trigger Man	1.0	Crave	186	T
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue	5.0	Electronic Arts	186	E
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.0	Electronic Arts	187	T
Viewtiful Joe 2	9.0	Capcom	187	T
Virtua Quest	5.5	Sega	189	T
WWE: Day of Reckoning	8.0	THQ	185	T
X-Men Legends	8.0	Activision	186	T
Zoids: Battle Legends	3.5	Atari	185	T
NINTENDO DS				
Advance Wars: Dual Strike	9.0	Nintendo	196	E
Asphalt Urban GT	6.5	Ubisoft	188	E
Bomberman	7.0	Ubisoft	194	E
Feel the Magic: XY/XX	9.0	Sega	188	T
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	5.0	Konami	196	E
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	6.0	Electronic Arts	195	T
Kirby: Canvas Curse	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madden NFL 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Madden NFL 2005	7.5	Electronic Arts	188	E
Meteos	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Mr. Driller: Drill Spirits	7.0	Namco	188	E
Nanostray	8.0	Majesco	195	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	6.0	Electronic Arts	193	E
Nintendogs	8.5	Nintendo	196	E
Pac 'N Roll	7.5	Namco	196	E
Pac-Pix	8.0	Namco	192	E
Ping Pals	5.0	THQ	188	E
Pokémon Dash	5.0	Nintendo	191	E
Polarium	7.5	Nintendo	192	E
Puyo Pop Fever	6.0	Atlus	193	E
Rayman DS	6.5	Ubisoft	191	E
Retro Atari Classics	5.0	Atari	191	E
Ridge Racer DS	7.0	Namco	188	E
Robots	4.5	VU Games	190	E
Space Invaders Revolution	4.0	Mastiff	196	E
Spider-Man 2	6.5	Activision	188	E
Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	Ubisoft	194	T

REVIEWER NOTES

THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

Five of the 500 reasons this game rocks: Riding choppers like bucking broncos. Hurling tanks like shotputs. Grinding out stunts on a bus. Trashing everything with a wrecking ball-and-chain. And helping good citizens with their commutes—by throwing them from skyscrapers. Two reasons it doesn't: frame rate and camera control, which melts down when the action boils over. —Steven G.

>X-MEN LEGENDS

The attention to detail and dungeon-hack mechanics of X-Men Legends are spot-on, but the lack of a consistent multiplayer mode fundamentally cripples an otherwise great title.

—Andy M.

GEIST

Okay, so I was pretty hard on Geist last month, but for a game that was in development for as long as it was, it should have been better. However, I should mention that the mulltiplayer mode is quite fun—the body-hopping and solid weapon selection make it feel much closer to the original spirit of the game.

—Chris S.

>SECOND SIGHT

It's been nearly a year since its release, and I'm still thinking about Second Sight. Why this first-person-perspective gem didn't attract a huge audience is a mystery even greater than the one in the game's expertly crafted story.

—George S.

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Sprung	7.5	Ubisoft	188	T
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	8.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Super Mario 64 DS	8.5	Nintendo	188	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	8.0	Electronic Arts	188	E
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.5	Electronic Arts	188	E
WarioWare: Touched!	9.0	Nintendo	190	E
World Championship Poker: Deluxe Series	5.0	Crave	192	E
Yoshi Touch & Go	7.0	Nintendo	191	E
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour	8.0	Konami	196	E
Zoo Keeper	4.5	Ignition	189	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
Ace Combat Advance	4.0	Namco	190	E
Advance Guardian Heroes	7.5	Ubisoft	185	E
The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius: The Attack of the Twonkies	4.0	THQ	185	E
Animaniacs: Lights! Camera! Action!	4.5	Ignition	190	E
Backyard Basketball	4.5	Atari	186	E
Banjo Pilot	7.0	THQ	189	E
Batman Begins	5.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
Boktai 2: Solar Boy Django	7.5	Konami	185	T
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adventures	2.0	Activision	188	T
Cartoon Network Block Party	3.0	Majesco	185	E
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	3.5	Global Star	195	E
Classic NES Series Castlevania	8.5	Nintendo	186	E
Classic NES Series Dr. Mario	7.0	Nintendo	186	E
Classic NES Series Metroid	8.0	Nintendo	186	E
Classic NES Series Zelda II: The Adventure of Link	7.0	Nintendo	186	E
Codename Kids Next Door—Operation S.O.D.A.	4.5	Global Star	187	E
Crushed Baseball	2.5	Summitsoft	186	E
Dead to Rights	5.0	Destination	187	T
Disney's Herbie: Fully Loaded	5.5	Disney Interactive	194	E
Disney's Kim Possible III: Team Possible	6.5	Disney Interactive	195	E
Disney's Magical Quest 3 Starring Mickey & Donald	5.5	Capcom	194	E
Donkey Kong Country 2	6.5	Nintendo	187	E
Dragon Ball GT: Transformation	5.5	Atari	196	E10+
Dragon Ball Z: Buu's Fury	7.0	Atari	185	E
Dreamworks' Shark Tale	4.5	Activision	185	E
Duel Masters: Kaijudo Showdown	4.0	Atari	187	E
Dynasty Warriors Advance	7.0	Nintendo	196	E 10+
Elf	2.0	Crave	187	E
F/A 18F: Super Hornet	3.5	Majesco	188	E
F-Zero—GP Legend	7.5	Nintendo	185	E
The Fairly OddParents!: Shadow Showdown	4.0	THQ	186	E
Fantastic Four	6.5	Activision	194	E 10+
Fear Factor Unleashed	3.0	Hip Interactive	187	T
FIFA Soccer 2005	7.0	Electronic Arts	186	E
Final Fantasy I & II: Dawn of Souls	8.5	Square Enix	187	E
Finding Nemo: The Continuing Adventures	3.5	THQ	186	E
Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones	9.0	Nintendo	193	E
Golden Nugget Casino	2.0	Majesco	188	E
Grand Theft Auto Advance	7.5	Rockstar	186	M
Gumby vs. the Astrobots	5.0	Namco	196	E
Gundam Seed: Battle Assault	5.0	Bandai	186	T
Harvest Moon: More Friends of Mineral Town	8.5	Natsume	195	E
Hot Wheels: Stunt Track Challenge	6.0	THQ	188	E
Hugo: The Evil Mirror	3.0	Namco	192	E
The Incredibles	6.0	THQ	186	E
It's Mr. Pants	6.5	THQ	187	E
James Pond Codename Robocod	4.0	Valcon Games	195	E
Juka and the Monophonic Menace	5.0	Orbital Media	196	E
Kill.Switch	6.0	Destination	185	T
Killer 3-D Pool	4.0	Destination	192	E
Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories	7.5	Square Enix	188	E
Kirby & The Amazing Mirror	8.0	Nintendo	186	E
Klonoa 2: Dream Champ Tournament	8.5	Namco	190	E
The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap	9.5	Nintendo	189	E
LEGO Knights' Kingdom	5.0	THQ	187	E
LEGO *Star Wars*	6.5	Eidos	192	E
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	6.0	Activision	186	E
Lilo and Stitch 2: Hamsterviel Havoc	5.5	Buena Vista	185	E
Lizzie McGuire 2	3.5	Buena Vista	186	E
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	8.0	Electronic Arts	187	T
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madden NFL 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Mario Party Advance	6.0	Nintendo	191	E
Mario Pinball Land	7.5	Nintendo	186	E
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Colonel & Team Protoman	6.5	Capcom	194	E
Mega Man Zero 3	7.5	Capcom	186	E
Metal Slug Advance	8.5	SNK	188	T
Monopoly	5.0	Destination	188	E
Monster Trucks	3.5	Majesco	189	E
Mr. Driller 2	5.0	Namco	193	E
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	6.0	Destination	185	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	5.0	Electronic Arts	187	E
Nicktoons: Freeze Frame Frenzy	4.5	THQ	186	E
Pac-Man Pinball Advance	7.0	Namco	193	E
Pac-Man World	6.0	Destination	188	E
Pokémon Emerald	6.5	Nintendo	192	E
The Polar Express	5.5	THQ	187	E
Popeye: Rush for Spinach	5.0	Namco	193	E
Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	4.0	THQ	186	E
Power Rangers: S.P.D.	4.0	THQ	196	E10+
Racing Gears Advance	7.5	Orbital Media	189	E
Rapala Pro Fishing	3.5	Activision	186	E
Rayman: Hoodlum's Revenge	5.5	Ubisoft	191	E
Riviera: The Promised Land	6.5	Atlus	194	T
Robots	4.5	VU Games	190	E
Rugrats: All Grown Up! —Express Yourself	4.0	THQ	186	E
Scrabble Blast	7.5	Destination	193	E
SD Gundam Force	5.5	Bandai	186	E
Shaman King: Legacy of the Spirits—Soaring Hawk/ Sprinting Wolf	3.5	Konami	191	E
Shaman King: Master of Spirits 2	6.5	Konami	196	E 10+
Shrek 2: Beg For Mercy	4.5	Activision	188	E
Sigma Star Saga	8.5	Namco	195	E10+
Smashing Drive	4.5	Destination	188	E
The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie	5.0	THQ	186	E
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	7.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Star Wars Trilogy: Apprentice of the Force	5.5	Ubisoft	185	E
Strawberry Shortcake: Summertime Adventure	3.0	Majesco	189	E
Super Army War	6.5	Atlus	190	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2: Battle Nexus	6.0	Konami	186	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker	3.0	Majesco	188	E
That's So Raven	2.0	Buena Vista	186	E
Thunderbirds	3.0	VU Games	186	E
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Advance	3.5	Crave	193	E
Tony Hawk's Underground 2: World Destruction Tour	6.5	Activision	186	E
Tron 2.0: Killer Ap	7.0	Buena Vista	185	E
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue	4.5	Electronic Arts	187	E
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.5	Electronic Arts	187	E
WarioWare: Twisted!	8.5	Nintendo	193	E
World Championship Poker	3.5	Crave	188	E
WWE Survivor Series	3.0	THQ	187	T
Yoshi Topsi-Turvy	7.0	Nintendo	194	E
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Destiny Board Traveler	2.5	Konami	188	E
Yu Yu Hakusho: Tournament Tactics	3.0	Atari	187	E
Zoids: Legacy	4.5	Atari	185	E
Zooo	4.5	Ignition	196	E

>MVP BASEBALL 2005

As the MLB pennant race starts to heat up, I've been playing more and more of MVP Baseball 2005. I've currently got my Twins in first place by four games. Hopefully the real-life team can can make a similar run.

—Steve T.

NINTENDOGS

Nintendogs isn't so much a game as it is a daily obsession. Sure, it's fun to find and unlock items that help you succeed in puppy-training competitions. But the title's real draw is the bond that you develop with your canine pal. Scratch it behind the ears and it will turn its head to give you a better angle on the sweet spot. Call it and it will come (most of the time). There's no suspension of disbelief. It's like there is a real dog inside your DS, and like a real dog, the game begs for your attention. —George S.

>YU-GI-OH!: NIGHTMARE TROUBADOUR

YGO!'s DS debut evolves trading-card video games so much with dual field views that I'll never again be able to play a TCG on anything but the DS. It's intuitive and fun—and I don't even like YGO!

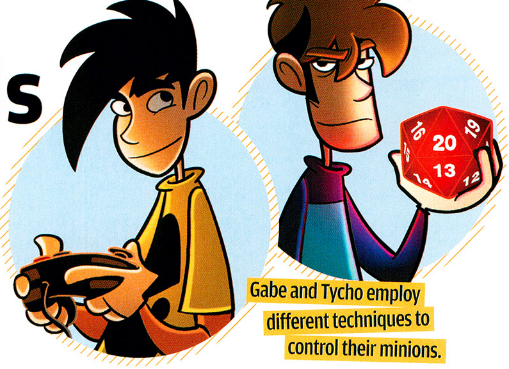
—Steven G.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: MAJORA'S MASK

As we receive glimpses into the strange world of The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, N64 title Majora's Mask—easily the most bizarre game in the Zelda universe—deserves mention. Its immersive world lives and breathes, bringing the game's dark aesthetic to life through unsettling environments and wild characters (such as Tingle). Its heavy use of time constraints was often frustrating, but as a whole Majora's Mask is unforgettable. —Andy M.

EVENTS

Thousands Pack PAX



Gabe and Tycho employ different techniques to control their minions.

On August 26-28, 2005, nearly 8,000 gamers swarmed the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue, Washington, for the second annual Penny Arcade Expo. Their mission? To celebrate games, music and good old-fashioned mayhem.

Penny Arcade is more a way of life than a video game website. Gabe and Tycho (the online personas of PA creators Mike Krahulik Jerry Holkins, respectively) are infamous in the hard-core-gamer circle for printing things that the rest of us wouldn't dare. Their website contains imaginative comics and insightful game commentary that spares no realm of the industry. At the rate that Penny Arcade has been growing (it currently logs nearly three-and-a-half million readers worldwide), it was only a matter of time before it outgrew the Web. And so we have PAX, a gaming convention organized by geeks for geeks.

PAX is truly unique among gaming conventions in that it is all about the gamer. You don't feel like you're there to be sold on something—you feel like you're there to have fun. "Obviously we used the power of the comic strip to sort of kick-start the convention, but I think it has a momentum and a power all its own now," comments Mike Krahulik. Jerry Holkins adds: "There really isn't anything else like it."

The friendly, high-spirited freeplay console stations represented the true gaming spirit of PAX.

Gabe and Tycho stand watch over the main hall of the convention center.

ON EXHIBIT

With everything from PC LAN parties to impromptu Mario Tennis matches to Nintendogs puppy playtime, the convention center was a mecca for gamers of all types. The different game formats had dedicated rooms—hushed and serious board and card gamers occupied one area while the rowdy console tournament entrants whupped it up in another.

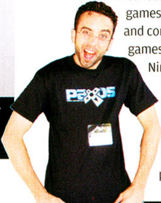
In one of the main halls, panel discussions with industry professionals drew huge audiences. The offerings included two question-and-answer sessions with Krahulik and Holkins, a panel on how to get into the game industry, and a panel about the future of online gaming.

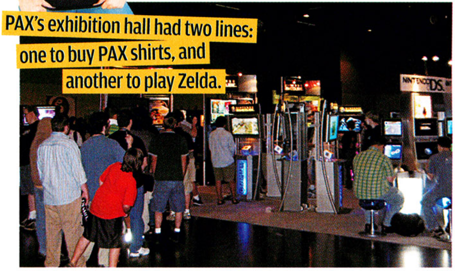
Companies from all parts of the gaming industry set up shop in the exhibition hall—showgoers were treated to the opportunity to check out the newest in collectible card games, PC games, and console video games.

> "There really isn't anything else like it."
> —Jerry Holkins (aka Tycho)

Nintendo's booth drew particularly huge crowds. Throngs of gamers played many of the titles coming out later this year, such as Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance, Super Mario Strikers, and a strong collection of DS games. But the biggest attention-getter of the show was the pair of demo stations for The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. People waited in line up to an hour to get their hands on it, and the crowds around the displays were often more than six people deep.

In the corridors connecting all the rooms, console stations were set up to let gamers plop down and have a quick game with total strangers. Game publisher Ubisoft also used the open areas for a few tournaments of its own. Every where you looked, gamers were having an awesome time.





PAX's exhibition hall had two lines: one to buy PAX shirts, and another to play Zelda.

PAX ROCK

At PAX, games are just the beginning. A wide array of video game-related musical acts rocked the convention center on both Friday and Saturday nights, playing for thousands of geeky fans. The video game pianist Martin Leung (who we featured in Volume 195) kicked off the Friday-night concert, followed by hip-hop band Optimus Rhyme. (Not only is OR fronted by Nintendo employee Andy Hartpence, but the band has a song called "Tim Garret," titled after the long-time Nintendo Power graphic designer.) Friday's musical extravaganza was closed out by the mighty NES cover band NESkimos.

But did you think PAX would have only one NES cover band on the bill? Saturday night's show kept the convention center shaking until 2:00 in the morning with Minibosses, a popular NES cover band that came from Phoenix, Arizona, to headline the event. Their music stands out from the field of NES-centric groups because of their unique approach: they cram as much material as possible from a single game into one nonstop piece of music. Their version of Megaman 2, for instance, has 16 unique parts and goes on for over eight minutes. Band member Aaron Burke told us, "The best NES [songs] out there really are great pieces of art that have withstood the test of time." The band's appreciation for the source material is apparent on stage—they never miss a beat.

Minibosses shared the stage with MC Chris, MC Frontalot and Conney Lin. Conney Lin's performance was a beautiful piano-based rendition of songs from the Final Fantasy series, while MC Chris (known also as the voice of MC P Pants on Cartoon Network's Aqua Teen Hunger Force) performed a number of hip-hop songs about subjects such as Star Wars and playing video games. All seven musical acts heightened the PAX experience, and forced gamers to put down their controllers for a while and let loose.

Optimus Rhyme MC Andy Hartpence is also known as NOA Andy on the Nintendo.com boards.

The onstage energy of Minibosses makes NES music come back to life.

During PAX's screening of The Wizard, the crowd's reaction to Super Mario Bros. 3's screen time was so exuberant that you'd have thought the audience of 1,000-plus was seeing the game for the first time.

That's a whole lotta NES!
Every licensed NES game ever made, plus a number of peripherals, served as the grand prize for PAX's Omegathon tournament.

NP crew member Pete Michaud (seen here in the red-and-white hat) gives his all in PAX's Super Smash Bros. Melee tournament.

> **"Honestly I think PAX will continue long after Penny Arcade has run its course."**
>
> —Mike Krahulik (aka Gabe)

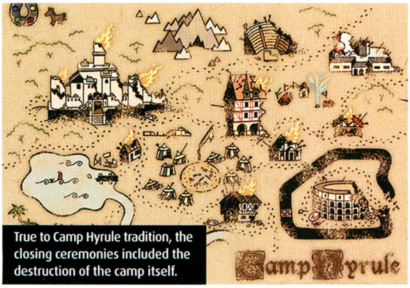
OMEGATHON

While some came to PAX to see upcoming games, many were there strictly to play. PAX's tournaments ran the gamut of platforms and genres, from Soul Calibur II to Mario Tennis. The Super Smash Bros. Melee tournament was especially crazy. A long standby list had Smashers waiting for a chance to be one of 200 contenders. The competition was fierce, and lasted for nearly three hours. NP staff member Pete Michaud entered the tournament but, sadly, was knocked out early on. (Way to represent, Pete.)

But even PAX's most popular competitions paled in comparison to Omegathon, the mother of all gaming tournaments. This year's Omegathon consisted of six rounds over three days. Each round had contestants playing a different type of game, forcing each competitor to prove that he's the best all-around gamer in the competition. Contestants played Mario Kart: Double Dash!!, a tabletop game called Diceland and even Karaoke Revolution. The subject of the final round was kept secret from the players until they stepped onto the stage. At last year's PAX, the final two contestants had to play Pong for the grand prize. This year, it was Combat for Atari 2600.

The winner of Omegathon's Combat match got to choose between two halves of a nearly complete NES collection (all but 10 games). Penny Arcade purchased the collection from a guy trying to sell it on eBay some months ago, and they've been tempting their readers with it ever since.

Like every other aspect of PAX, Omegathon is for the fans. Contestants were selected randomly from a pool of pre-registrants, and almost every PAX-goer watched the competition. With two PAXs under their belts now, Krahulik and Holkins feel the weight of Penny Arcade's success, but they embrace it. "Honestly I think PAX will continue long after Penny Arcade has run its course," Krahulik states. "We certainly feel a lot of pressure to really use the power we have in the community to do things that are positive. I think PAX is a good example of that."
—Andy M. and Chris S.

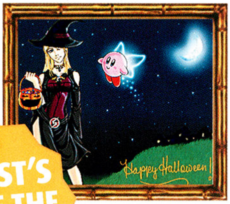


True to Camp Hyrule tradition, the closing ceremonies included the destruction of the camp itself.

Pack the Tents

Nearly 9,000 people attended the Twilight Princess-themed Camp Hyrule this year. The five-day event included games and contests, as well as special chats with Nintendo insiders. Congrats to the members of Cabin 9—through their activity and contest participation, they showed this year's best camp spirit. A big thanks to all who attended!

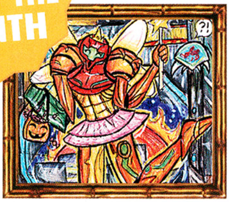
AUGUST'S ART OF THE MONTH


Happy Halloween!

ARTIST:
lonewolfy

SUBJECT:
Nintendo Character—Halloween Costume

Computer-Drawn Category



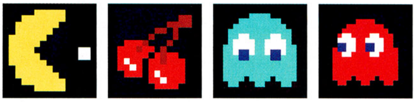
ARTIST:
thuntherware

SUBJECT:
Nintendo Character—Halloween Costume

Hand-Drawn Category

We missed our Halloween timing a little, but that didn't stop you from showing off your talents! Don't worry; we'll have a Valentine's Day contest ready by April. Post your art at **forums.nintendo.com**.

Custom-Made Avatars **By Tim Garret**



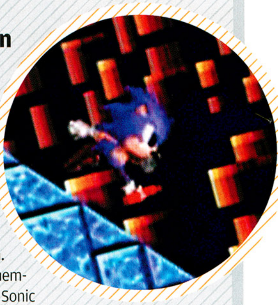
Sage Reviews

Now that all the fall games have started hitting stores, there's no shortage of titles to write about. Let's hear your takes on some of the new releases like Nintendogs, Geist and Advance Wars: Dual Strike!

Sage Review of the Month

Sonic Gems Collection

reviewed by
FALCON6



Many people were slightly disappointed by Sega's decision to not include Sonic CD in Sonic Mega Collection. But Sega has responded by giving us what we wanted, and more! Sonic Gems Collection is a must-have for anyone who is a Sonic fan. Sonic CD still plays exactly as I remember it, and most fans agree that of Sonic 2D games, this is the best one out there. Sega has also included Sonic R, which has many of the Sonic characters racing against each other. Sonic the Fighters, while not the greatest fighting game, is still a lot of fun for Sonic fans. The Game Gear ports offer some fun at times, but they don't look so great on the T.V. screen. Mega Collection is a great game, but if there's one problem I see with it, it's the Game Gear games. However, Sonic CD, Sonic R, and Sonic the Fighters make up for it in full. One of the best things about this title is the price: you can get it for $29.99, along with Sonic Mega Collection for $19.99. So, if you're a person who got into the 3D Sonic adventures and wanted to try the old ones, you should pick them both up. It's definitely worth the money.

Excerpts from Other Sage Reviews

Nintendogs
"The AI of Nintendogs is absolutely amazing to the point that you won't even remember you're playing a game anymore."
—PSYCHO_SNAKE_NINJA

Meteos
"I've neglected my boyfriend, my chores, my website, isolated myself from my family and friends, and rarely sleep because of this game."
—KITTYKATSTAR

What's a Sage?
Sages are members of the NSider online community that are put through the wringer and hand-picked by Nintendo. They get tons of special privileges, including opportunities to review games for Nintendo Power magazine.

BOY, DID WE SCREW UP!

In our zealous effort to provide a place to let you, dear reader, show the world how much you love the Big N, our journalistic practices have been slightly askew. In our September issue (Volume 195), we made two rather outrageous oversights. First, the model for all of the awesome Link costumes, code-named Pikmin Link, turns out to be female. (Sorry—the long hair and tunic confused us.) Second, we mistook Mario costumers Doug Dennis and Jade Fang as a father/daughter team, when in fact they're not related. Sorry!

community@nintendopower.com
pokemon_community@nintendopower.com

INSIDE NINTENDO

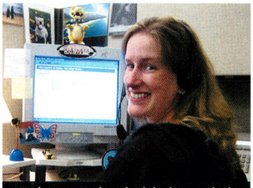
END OF THE LINE

After roughly 20 years, a Nintendo institution has come to a bittersweet end—Nintendo's gameplay phone line took its last call ever on August 29.

There were fewer than 10 gameplay counselors when the line first opened, and without the aid of computer databases, they were required to memorize a selection of games, then take a written test to prove they could answer consumers' questions. The demand for gameplay help grew and grew, and at its peak the gameplay line had a staff of 250 counselors; in June, 1992, counselors answered a record 500,000 gameplay calls in one month! Even Nintendo VP Reggie Fils-Aime admits that he had to call the gameplay line when he couldn't figure out how to reach Ganon in The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past. But as the Internet and other gaming media like Nintendo Power have grown, the need for phone assistance has dwindled. So, after more than 27 million satisfied customers, an era has ended.

Nintendo still plans to provide strong gameplay coverage through other outlets. The Power Line, a prerecorded tip line (425.885.7529), will remain open and be updated regularly, and Nintendo is currently working on making many of the game databases that guided counselors for two decades available to the public via nintendo.com.

— Chris S.



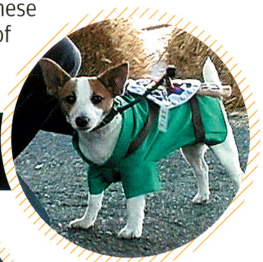
NOA's Laura Fredeen had the honor of taking the last gameplay call; the game was The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker.

COSPLAY

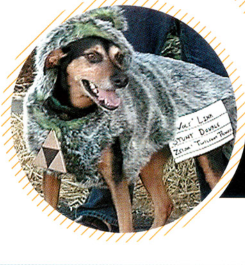
DOGGIE DRESS-UP

In honor of the Nintendogs launch, Nintendo of America held an event for employees, encouraging them to create costumes for their real-life pups. Surprisingly, only two Link-themed dogs showed up to the event. Man, these dog owners have a lot of time on their hands.

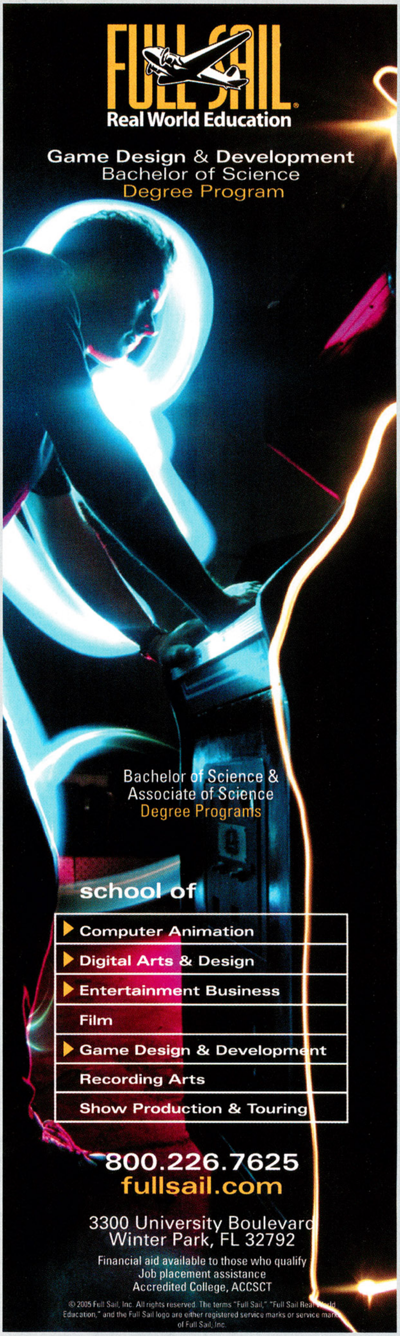
—Andy M.



Admittedly, this is just another lame attempt to get my dog Milo into the mag. But doesn't he make a great Ocarina of Time Link?



The extra coat of fur on NOA Mac's dog Nina made for a perfect Twilight Princess.



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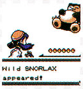
POKé MANIA!

In honor of the new GCN game, we're letting Pokémon take over this month's quiz section. But don't expect the questions to be easy! Visit **nintendopower.com/quiz** for the answers today, or wait for your next issue.

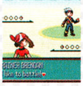
1 In Pokémon Emerald, the player is surprised to find out that Steven is no longer the Pokémon League Champion. Who took his title?

a. Brendan
b. Juan
c. Spencer
d. Wallace

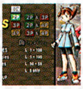
2 What was the first Pokémon game with both male and female playable Trainers?



a. Pokémon Crystal



b. Pokémon Ruby & Sapphire



c. Pokémon Stadium 2

3 In the *Pokémon* animated series, what move did Meowth give up to learn human speech?

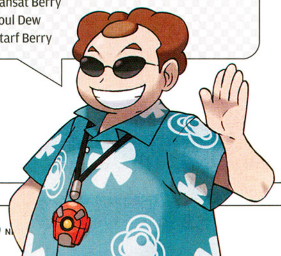
a. Pay Day
b. Bite
c. Thief

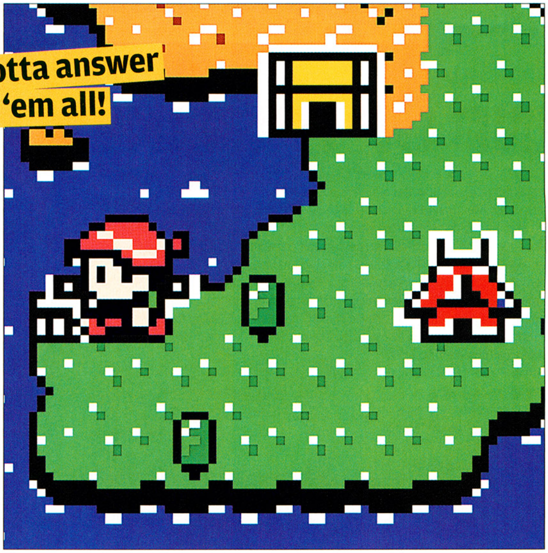
4 In Pokémon Crystal, what can't you do on Friday?

a. Fight Lapras in Union Cave
b. Get Poison Barb from Frieda
c. Listen to the Pokémon March on the radio
d. Ride the *S.S. Aqua* from Olivine to Vermilion

5 Besides the upgraded Trainer Cards, what rare item will Scott give you for getting all the gold medals in the Battle Frontier of Pokémon Emerald?

a. Enigma Berry
b. Lansat Berry
c. Soul Dew
d. Starf Berry





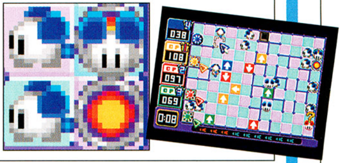
Gotta answer 'em all!

PIXEL-PERFECT

NAME THAT SCREENSHOT

Is it an RPG? Is that a girl or a boy? These questions actually won't help you figure out what game the enlarged screenshot above represents. (Did you think we were just going to give the answer away?)

LAST MONTH'S FEATURE: PUYO POP (GBA)



6 What Elite Four Trainer has all his or her capes custom-made on a far-off island?

a. Lance
b. Koga
c. Drake
d. Lorelei

7 In Pokémon FireRed and LeafGreen, you meet a Trainer at the Memorial Pillar paying tribute to his departed Onix. What was his Onix's favorite drink?

a. Fresh Water
b. Lemonade
c. Moo Moo Milk
d. Soda Pop

8 Your opponent decides to be tricky and challenges you to a single battle using a team of six Shedinja. You want to show him up by starting with a Skarmory and eliminating his entire team in two turns. What key move would you use to claim victory?

a. Toxic
b. Aerial Ace
c. Spikes
d. Sandstorm

9 What colors does a specially colored Rayquaza boast?

a. Green & yellow
b. Black & red
c. Purple & yellow
d. Blue & pink

10 In Pokémon Red and Blue, who gives the player the Town Map?

a. Your rival's sister
b. Professor Oak
c. Brock
d. Team Rocket

11 The final challenge for players of Pokémon Crystal, Gold and Silver is a battle against the Pokémon League Champion, Red. What level Pikachu does Red lead off with?

a. 69
b. 75
c. 81
d. 100

Last month's answers: 1: c, 2: b (for DS), 3: b, 4: a, 5: c, 6: c, 7: a, 8: b, 9: b

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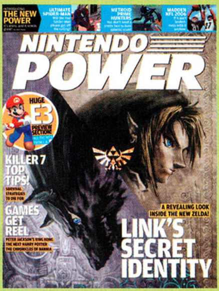
OCTOBER 2005, VOLUME 196
Into the Fire (Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire), The Art of War (Spartan: Total Warrior), NP Top 200, Return of the King (King Kong), Inside Zelda, Land of the Lost (Lost in Blue), Trace Elements (Trace Memory), 2-D or Not 2-D, Hero Worship (Gunstar Super Heroes), Hulk's Bosses Need a Beating (The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction), War-Torn? (Advance Wars: Dual Strike), Build the Ultimate Weapon (Sigma Star Saga), SSX on Tour, Battalion Wars, Ultimate Spider-Man, Tak: The Great Juju Challenge, X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse, Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney, New Puppy Magazine (Nintendogs)

NINTENDO POWER
HOG HEAVEN!
SEGA ROLLS OUT THREE SONIC SENSATIONS
ZELDA DEMO
HULK RUNS AMOK
RAISING THE SPORTS BAR

SEPTEMBER 2005, VOLUME 195
Sega Goes Hog Wild (Shadow the Hedgehog, Sonic Rush, Sonic Gems Collection), Man's Best Friend (Nintendogs), The Agony and the XD (Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness), Bros. of Summer (Mario Superstar Baseball), Help Wanted (Trauma Center), The Zelda Demo, Inside Zelda, Out of Bounds?, Madden NFL 06, Kirby: Canvas Curse, Smash Bros. Melee, Prince of Persia 3, Mario Tennis Advance, Metroid Prime Pinball, NBA Live 06, WWE: Day of Reckoning 2, Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix

BONUS!
NINTENDO POWER
READY FOR WI-FI
MARIO KART PAVES THE WAY FOR CONNECTED GAMING
THE NEXT GEN
SPECIAL POST-E3 ISSUE

AUGUST 2005, VOLUME 194
Mario Kart DS, I Love LA (E3 Wrap-Up), Built to Last, Nintendo World, Historical License, Make Your Move, Lunar: Dragon Song, Meteos, Age of Empires: The Age of Kings, DK: King of Swing, Zoo Tycoon, The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction, One Piece, Zatch Bell!, Pac 'n Roll, Madden NFL 06, Inside Zelda



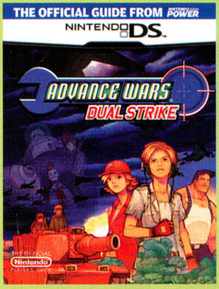
NINTENDO POWER
HUGE E3
KILLER 7 TOP TIPS!
GAMES GET REEL
A REVEALING LOOK INSIDE THE NEW ZELDA!
LINK'S SECRET IDENTITY

JULY 2005, VOLUME 193
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, Renaissance Mario, Not Lost in Translation, Killer 7, Pokémon Emerald, Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones, Animal Crossing DS, Nintendogs, Meteos, Trace Memory, Ultimate Spider-Man, Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance, Call of Duty 2: Big Red One, Medal of Honor: European Assault, Rebelstar: Tactical Command, Advance Wars: Dual Strike, Kirby: Canvas Curse, Shadow the Hedgehog, Snowboard Kids, GoldenEye: Rogue Agent, Electroplankton, Yoshi Topsy-Turvy, Nanostray, Spartan: Total Warrior, X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse, Inside Zelda

OFFICIAL NINTENDO PLAYER'S GUIDES

POKéMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS

BATTALION WARS



ADVANCE WARS: DUAL STRIKE

FIRE EMBLEM: THE SACRED STONES

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

- STAR FOX: ASSAULT
- METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES
- PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND-YEAR DOOR
- PIKMIN 2
- POKéMON COLOSSEUM
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURES

GAME BOY ADVANCE

- POKéMON EMERALD
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP
- FINAL FANTASY I & II: DAWN OF SOULS
- POKéMON FIRERED & LEAFGREEN
- METROID: ZERO MISSION
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ESRB GAME RATING INFORMATION
To contact the ESRB or for more information, visit www.esrb.org.
The Entertainment Software Rating Board evaluates each game's content and assigns one of the following ratings to reflect the appropriate age group for the game.

- Early Childhood
- Everyone
- Everyone (10+)
- Teen (13+)
- Mature (17+)
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- Rating Pending

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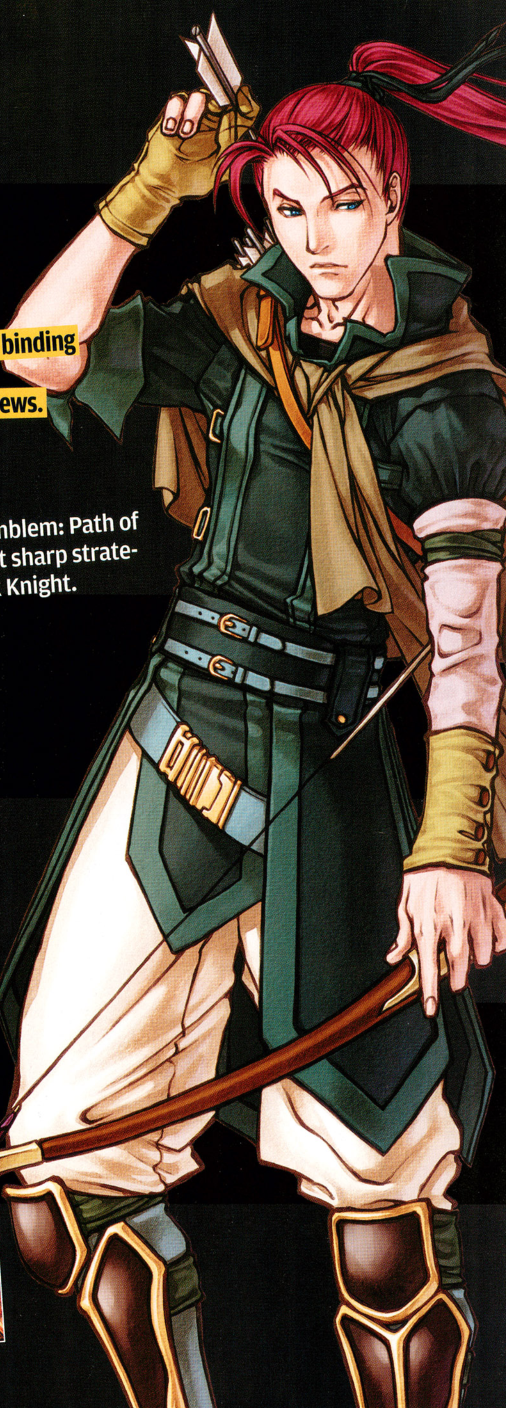
The most packed issue of the year so far bursts at the binding with strategies, previews, features and nearly 50 reviews.



SHINE ON

Fresh off of its 9.5-point review in this issue, Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance graces our cover next month. We'll impart sharp strategies for Ike and his crew's quest to defeat the Black Knight.

TRUE GRIT

Gun rides the line between realism and romance in its depiction of the Old West. Peruse our preview for all of the facts.

TWO MUCH

Nearly a year out of the blocks, the DS has hit its stride with touch-triggered, two-screen innovation. We examine upcoming killer apps in a special feature.

ROYAL REVEAL

Details on Ubisoft's latest Prince of Persia title have been sketchy so far, but we'll blow out all the juicy bits in a king-sized preview.

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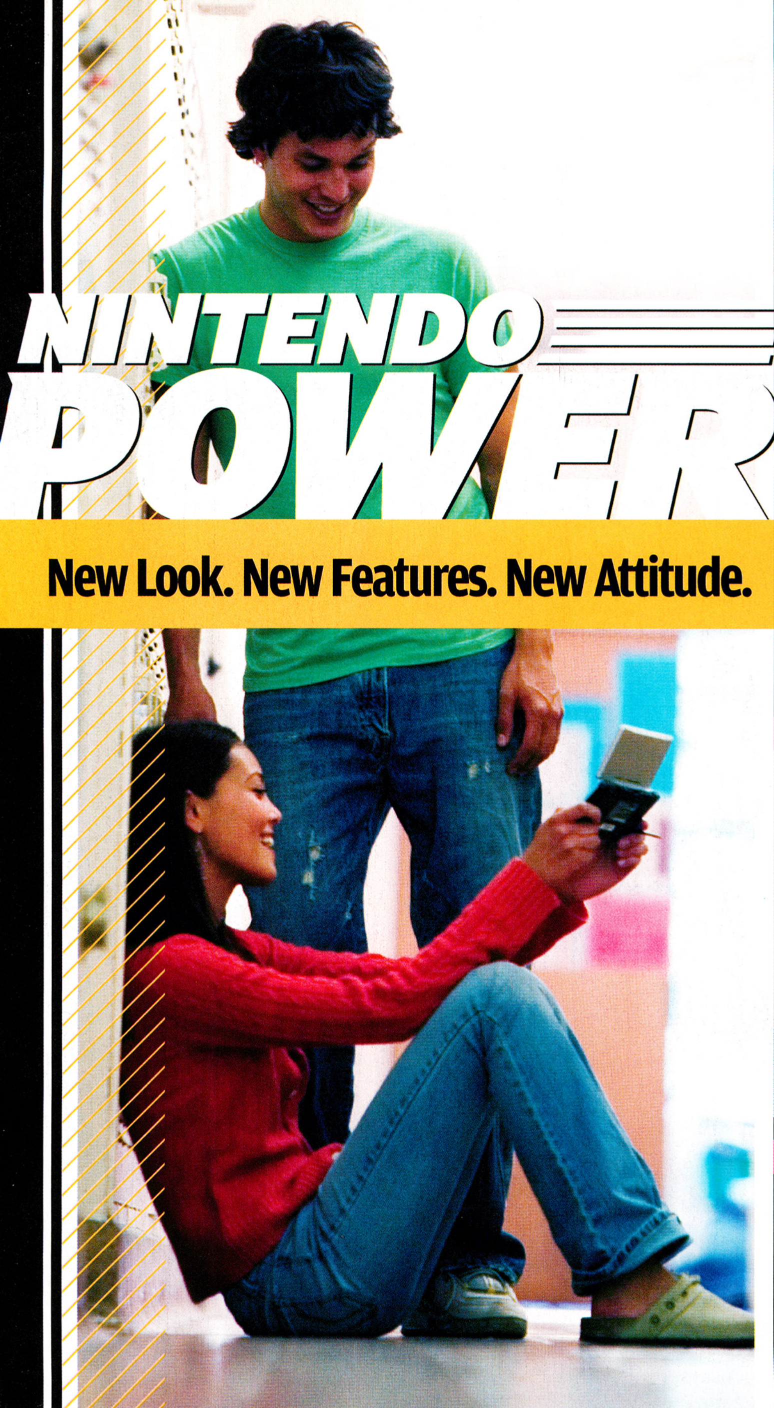
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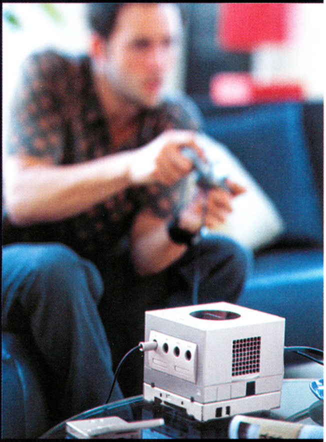

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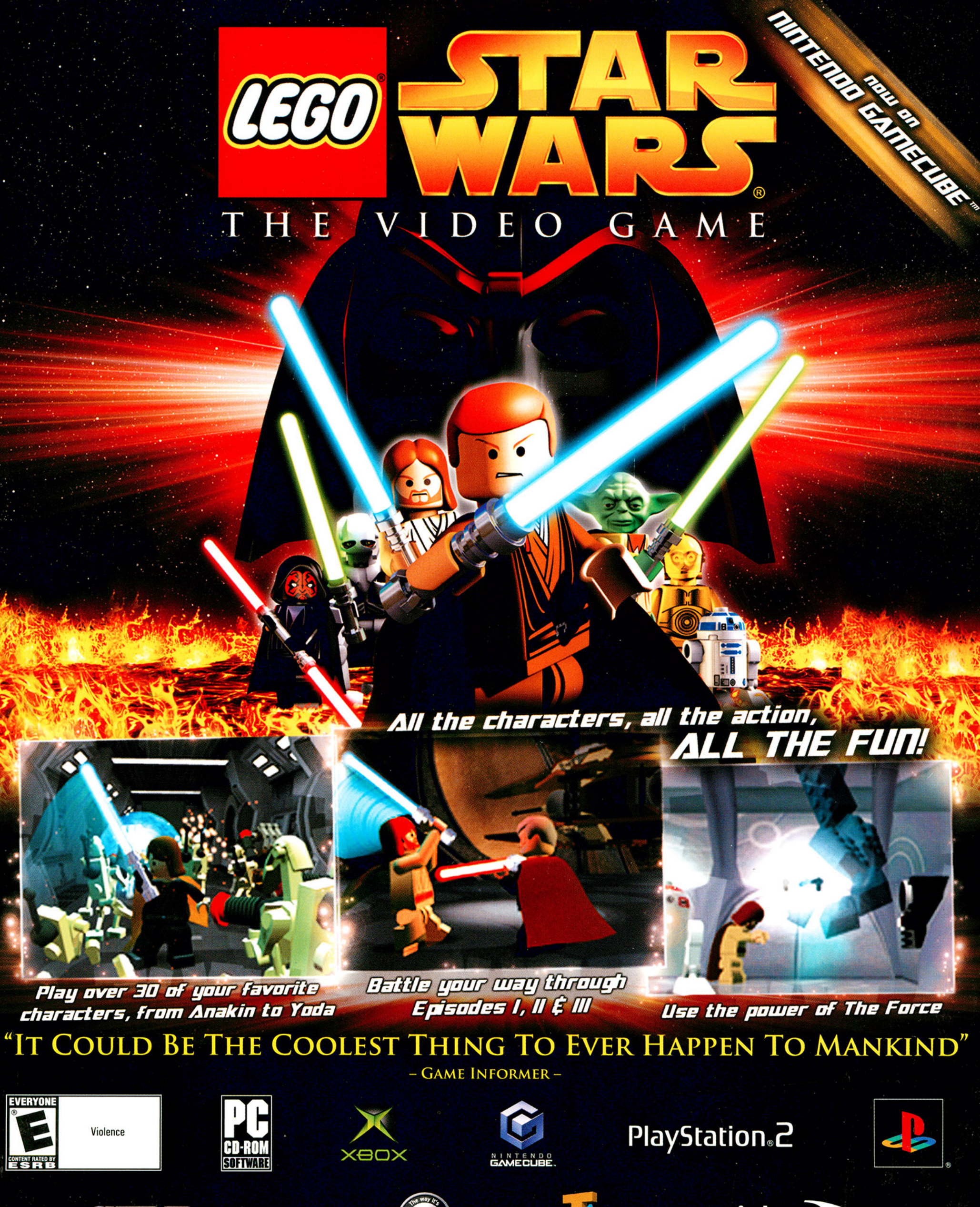
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